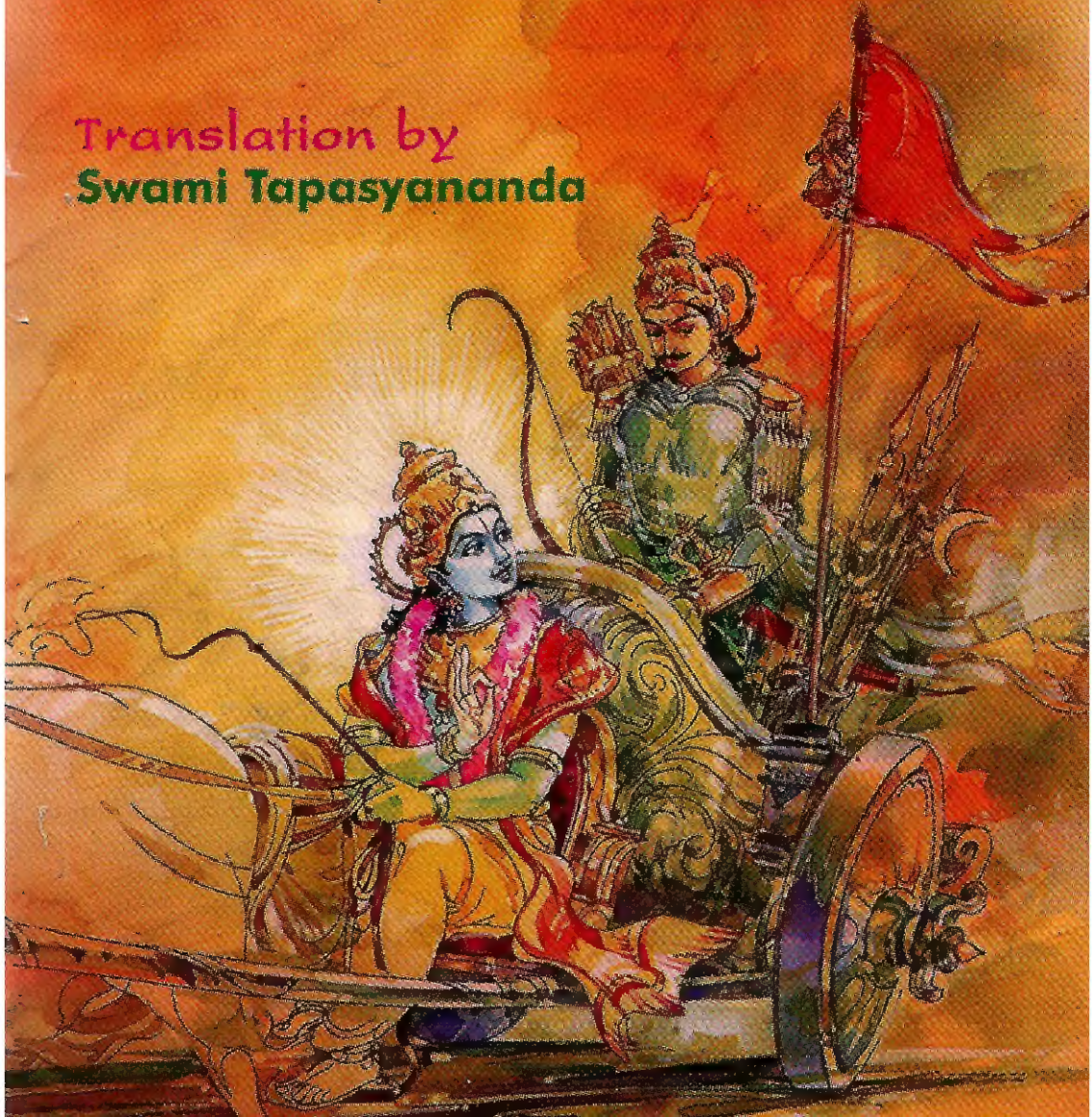


Bhagavad Gita

THE SCRIPTURE OF MANKIND

Translation by
Swami Tapasyananda



SRIMAD-BHAGAVAD-GITA

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Preface

Ever since Sri Śankaracharya's time, the *Bhagavad Gītā* has been recognised as one of the three authoritative and basic source books (*prasthāna-traya*) of Vedic religion. Though Sri Śankara's Introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā* bemoans the misinterpretation of this Text by others, we have no extant commentary or any kind of writing on the *Gītā* that precedes him. So it is reasonable to surmise that it was Sri Śankara who for the first time lifted it up from the vast ocean of Mahābhārata literature, and fixing its verse-contents at seven hundred, wrote an authoritative commentary on it, which is still studied with respect even by those who do not subscribe to his interpretation of it. We may also surmise that it must be he who gave recognition to it as an Upaniṣad and as Brahma-Vidya—a scripture that shatters ignorance and gives the knowledge of Brahman—, as it calls itself in the colophon.

It is customary to discuss the date and authorship of Hindu texts in their modern publications. We are not doing so here, as it is a futile exercise—a veritable counting of the leaves in place of eating mangoes after entering a mango garden. Discussing all the numerous modern views on these questions, Robert N. Minor, a learned and impartial modern exegetical commentator on the *Gītā*, concludes: "In summary, then, in the current state of *Gītā* studies there is no solid evidence to show that the *Gītā* is other than a basic unity. On the other hand, as many such as Edgerton and Zaehner have shown, the *Gītā* when understood in its own terms, is quite consistent and its parts on further study are inter-related. However, it is also not possible to identify the *Gītā*'s author with any probability, and then another question in the introductory matter remains unsolved." And regarding the date of the *Gītā* from the modern point of view, he concludes after taking into account all existing speculative theories: "We must tentatively

date the *Gītā* to 150 B.C. without much evidence." Under the circumstances, the Indian tradition on these subjects remains intact, and it consists in this: the *Gītā* is a revelation given by Sri Kṛṣṇa, the Pūrṇāvatāra, to humanity through his friend and disciple Arjuna at a critical moment of his life, and it has been put into its present form by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. As the well-known Sanskrit couplet says: "The *Gītā* is the most excellent nectarine milk, drawn by the cowherd's son Kṛṣṇa as its milker, from the cow of the *Upaniṣads*, using Arjuna as the calf. All men of purified intellect are the consumers of that milk."

Presenting as it does a credible world-view and a faith that is both broad and inspiring, its appeal is to the conscience of spiritually sensitive sections of humanity everywhere, irrespective of their religious affiliations. We have therefore described it as the Scripture of Mankind. It is for this reason that it has become one of the most oft-translated works, English itself having more than fifty translations, besides others in all the Indian languages and in some of the other foreign languages as well. A recognition of this universality of the *Gītā* is made in a slightly garbled form by Farquhar, the well-known Christian missionary-scholar of conservative views, when he says that 'Jesus is the reality of which the *Gītā* gives an imaginative picture' and that 'the author of the *Gītā* would have been a Christian, had he known Jesus.'¹ Far more correct it would have been to say that had the author of the *Gītā* and the deliverer of the Sermon on the Mount met, they would have recognised in each other a kindred spirit teaching an identical message, only with modifications as necessitated by variations in time and place.

The *Gītā* teaches man the goal to be attained by him and the means for attaining it. The goal is the Supreme Personal-Impersonal Brahman and the means, the paths of knowledge, work, psychic control and devotion. Differences in the interpretations of the *Gītā* among the Ācāryas, both ancient and modern, have arisen due to their varying perceptions on the relations between Brahman and the Jiva and on the relative importance of the four paths.

¹As quoted by Geoffrey Parrinder in his *Avatār and Incarnation*.

Critics may find in this a vein of inconsistency and unreliability that stands in the way of recognising the value of the *Gītā* as a guide to man and as a universal scripture. It is, however, forgotten by such critics that a universal scripture must contain in it several strands of teachings suited to men of different stages of development. These varying strands are not mutually contradictory or incompatible. They are the visions of the same Reality from the points of view of Jivas at different stages of development, dominated by different dispositions. The presence of this feature, in place of being a disqualification, is a proof of the genuineness of the inspiration behind this Text. For, God's gifts are not for a few only but for all who have need of them, and everyone can understand something from them provided one has spiritual sensitivity. That is why the *Gītā* has several interpretations coming from Ācāryas representing different spiritual traditions. In spite of their differences, they have to be accepted as embodying the varied views included in the inspired literature that is the *Gītā*.

In the annotations given in the present volume, comments have been confined to technically important verses for limiting the size of the volume. The comments have got only the Text as such in view, without identification with any particular school of thought. But help has been sought from classical interpretations as well as from the modern exegetical commentators like Zaehner and Minor. The overall point of view adopted is what is contained in Swami Vivekānanda's famous restatement of the Vedānta in the following aphoristic dictum:

Every soul is potentially Divine.

The goal of life is to manifest this Divine within by controlling Nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work, or worship, or by psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all of these—and be free.

This is the whole of Religion. Doctrines or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.

Amidst the numerous extant translations of the *Gītā*, a new edition of it like the present one may not in any way look very significant. It has, however, this much significance: it provides

an *economy edition* of the Text, with all facilities for serious students to study the verses—these facilities being introductory summary of each chapter, the Text in Devanagari, its transliteration into Roman script, the prose order with word for word meaning in Roman script, running translation and annotations wherever necessary. It is hoped that this edition will meet the need of a large cross section of spiritual enquirers who want to study the Gītā in the original.

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Meditation on the Gītā

पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्येमहाभारतम् ।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनी-
मम्ब त्वामनुसंदधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

*Om pārthāya pratibodhitāṁ bhagavatā Nārāyaṇena svayam
vyāseṇa grathitāṁ purāṇamuninā madhyemahābhārataṁ :
advaitāmṛta varṣiṇīṁ bhagavatīm aṣṭādaśā'dhyāyinīm
amba tvām anusandadhāmi bhagavad-gīte bhavadveṣiṇīm.*

*Om : Om Nārāyaṇena svayam : by Nārāyaṇa Himself Pār-
thāya : to Pārtha or Arjuna pratibodhitām : imparted purāṇa-
muninā : by the ancient sage Vyāseṇa : by Vyāsa madhyemahā-
bhārataṁ : in the middle of Mahābhārata grathitām : recorded
advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇīm : showering the nectar of Advaita bhagavīm :
Goddess aṣṭādaśā'dhyāyinīm : consisting of eighteen chapters
bhavadveṣiṇīm : destroyer of Samsāra amba : Mother, bhagavad-
Gīte : O Bhagavad-Gītā tvām : Thee anusandadhāmi : I meditate upon.*

Om! O Blessed Mother Bhagavad-Gītā, Thou Goddess! Who was imparted to Arjuna by Nārāyaṇa Himself, who was recorded amidst the Mahābhārata by Vyāsa the ancient sage, who showers the nectar of Advaita, who is composed of eighteen chapters—I meditate on Thee, the destroyer of Samsāra!

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।
येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमया प्रदीपः ॥

*Namo'stu te Vyāsa viśāla-buddhe
phullāravindā'yata-patra-netra;
yena tvayā bhārata-taila-pūrṇaḥ
prajvālito jñāna-mayaḥ pradīpaḥ.*

Viśālabuddhe : Of gigantic intellect *phullāravindā'yata-patra-netra* : having large eyes resembling the petals of a blossoming lotus *Vyāsa* : O Sage Vyāsa! *yena tvayā* : Thee by whom *bhārata-taila-pūrṇaḥ* : brimming with the oil of Mahābhārata *jñāna-mayaḥ* : of the nature of wisdom *pradīpaḥ* : lamp *prajvālitaḥ* : was lit *te* : to Thee *namaḥ* : salutations.

Salutations to Thee, O Vyāsa of mighty intellect, Thou whose eyes are large like the petals of a full-blown lotus! It was Thou who lit the wisdom-lamp which brims with the oil that is the Mahābhārata.

प्रपन्नपारिजाताय तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणये ।

ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृतदुहे नमः ॥

*Prapanna-pārijātāya totra-vetra'ika-pāṇaye;
jñāna-mudrāya Kṛṣṇāya gītāmṛta duhe namaḥ.*

Prapanna-pārijātāya : Who is a wish-yielding tree to the surrendered ones *totra-vetra'ika pāṇaye* : holding a cane for driving cattle in one hand *jñāna-mudrāya* : showing the sign of wisdom with the other *Gītā'mṛta-duhe* : milker of the nectarine milk of Gītā *Kṛṣṇāya* : to Kṛṣṇa, *namaḥ* : salutations.

Salutations to Thee Kṛṣṇa, who art a veritable wish-yielding tree to all surrendered ones, whose one hand holds a cane to drive cattle while the other is held in the Jñāna-pose, and who is famous as the milker of the nectarine milk that is the Bhagavad-Gītā.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः

पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

*Sarvo'paniṣado gāvo dogdhā Gopāla-nandanah;
pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīr-bhoktā dugdham gītāmṛtam mahat.*

Sarvopaniṣadaḥ : All the Upaniṣads *gāvaḥ* : cows; *gopāla-nandanāḥ* : the cowherd's son i.e. Kṛṣṇa *dogdhā* : milker; *Pārthaḥ* : Arjuna *vatsaḥ* : calf; *sudhīḥ* : men of pure mind *bhoktāḥ* : drinkers; *mahat* : great *amṛtam dugdham* : nectarine milk *gītā* : the Gītā.

All the Upaniṣads are the cows; the cowherd's son Kṛṣṇa is the milker; Pārtha (Arjuna) is the calf; the nectarine Gītā is the milk; and the pure-minded are the drinkers of it.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।

देवकीपरमानन्दं कुण्डं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

Vasudeva-sutam devam Kamsa-Cāṇūra-mardanam;

Devaki-paramānandam Kṛṣṇam vande jagadgurum.

Vasudevasutam : The son of Vasudeva *Kamsa-Cāṇūra-mardanam* : The destroyer of Kamsa and Cāṇūra *Devaki-paramānandam* the bestower of supreme delight to Devaki *jagadgurum* : the world-teacher *devam Kṛṣṇam* : Lord Kṛṣṇa *vande* : I salute.

I salute Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva, the bestower of supreme delight to Devaki, the destroyer of Kamsa and Cāṇūra, and the teacher of the world.

भीष्मद्रोणतटा जयद्रथजला गांधारनीलोत्पला

शल्यग्राहवती कृपेण वहनी कर्णेन वेलाकुला ।

अश्वत्थामविकर्णघोरमकरा दुर्योधनावर्तिनी

सोचीर्णा खलु पांडवै रणनदी कैवर्तकः केशवः ॥

Bhīṣma-droṇa-taṭā jayadratha-jalā Gāndhāra-nīlotpalā

Śalya-grāhavatī Kṛpeṇa vahanī Karṇena velākulā;

Aśvatthāma-vikarṇa-ghora-makarā Duryodhanā-vartinī

s'ottīrṇā khalu paṇḍavai raṇa-nadī kaivartakaḥ Keśavaḥ

Bhīṣma-droṇa-taṭā : With Bhīṣma and Droṇa as banks *Jayadratha-jalā* : with Jayadratha as water *Gāndhāra-nīlotpalā* : with the prince of Gāndhāra as the blue lotus *Śalya-grāhavatī* : with Śalya as the crocodile *Kṛpeṇa* : with Kṛpa *vahanī* : as current *Karṇena* : with Karṇa *velākulā* : as high waves *Aśvatthāma-*

Vikarṇa-ghora-makarā : with *Aśvatthāma* and *Vikarṇa* as terrible sharks *Duryodhanāvartīnī* : with *Duryodhana* as the whirl-pool *sā* : that *raṇa-nadī* : battle-river *Pāṇḍavaiḥ* : by the sons of *Pāṇḍu* *uttīrṇā* : was crossed *khalu* : lo! *kaivartakaḥ Keśavaḥ* : (with) *Keśava* as ferry-man.

Lo! The battle-river of *Kurukṣetra*, with *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa* as the banks; with *Jayadratha* as the water; with the prince of *Gāndhāra* as the blue water lily; with *Śalya* as the crocodile; with *Kṛpā* as the current; with *Karṇa* as the high wave; with *Aśvatthāma* and *Vikarṇa* as terrible sharks; and with *Duryodhana* as the whirl-pool—was crossed by the *Pāṇḍavas* because they had *Kṛṣṇa* as the ferry-man.

पाराशर्यवचः सरोजममलं गीतार्थगन्धोत्कटं

नानाख्यानककेसरं हरिकथासम्बोधनाबोधितम् ।

लोके सज्जनषट्पदैरहरहः पेपीयमानं मुदा

भूयाद्भारतपङ्कजं कलिमलप्रध्वंसिनः श्रेयसे ॥

Pārāśarya-vacaḥ-sarojam amalam gītārtha-gandhotkaṭam
nānā'khyānaku-kesaram Harikathā-sambodhanā-bodhitam ;
loke sajjana-ṣaṭpadair aharahaḥ pepīyamānaṁ mudā
bhūyād bhārata-paṅkajam kalimala-pradhvaṁsinaḥ śreyase.

Amalam : Stainless *Pārāśaryavachaḥ-sarojam* : born on the water of the words of the son of *Parāśara* *bhārata-paṅkajam* : the lotus of *Mahābhārata* *gītārtha-gandhotkaṭam* : having the message of the *Gītā* as its overpowering fragrance *Harikathā-sambodhanā-bodhitam* : which proclaims the glory of *Śrī Hari* *nānā'khyānaku-kesaram* : numerous narratives for its stamens *loke* : in the world *sajjana-ṣaṭpadaiḥ* : by honey-suckers constituted of virtuous men *mudā* : in great joy *aharahaḥ* : every day *pepīyamānam* : drunk again and again *kalimala-pradhvaṁsinaḥ* : of all who want to be free from the taint of the age of *Kali* *śreyase* : for the good of *bhūvāt* : may prevail.

May the stainless lotus of *Mahābhārata*, which was born on the waters of the words of *Vyāsa*, the son of *Parāśara*, which has the message of the *Gītā* for its overpowering fragrance, which contains numerous narratives proclaiming the glory of *Hari* as its stamens,

and which is sucked again and again in great joy every day by the honey-suckers of virtuous men—may it prevail for the good of all who want to be cleansed of the taint of the age of Kali!

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् ।

यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्दमाधवम् ॥

*Mūkam karoti vācālam paṅgum laṅghayate girim;
yat kṛpā tam aham vande paramānanda-mādhavam.*

Yat : Whose *kṛpā* : grace *mūkam* : the dumb *vācālam* : eloquent *karoti* : makes, *paṅgum* : the lame *girim* : mountain *laṅghayate* : enables to cross, *tam* : Him *paramā'nandam* : supremely blissful *Mādhavam* : Mādhava (*Kṛṣṇa*) *aham* : I *vande* : salute.

I salute Mādhava (Lord *Kṛṣṇa*), the Supremely Blissful One, by whose grace a dumb man can become eloquent, and a lame person cross over mountains.

यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेन्द्ररुद्रमरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्यैः स्तवै-

र्वेदैः साङ्गपदक्रमोपनिषदैर्गायन्ति यं सामगाः ।

ध्यानावस्थिततद्गतेन मनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनो

यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणा देवाय तस्मै नमः ॥

*Yam Brahmā-Varuṇe'ndra-Rudra-Marutaḥ stunvanti divyaiḥ
stavaiḥ*

*vedaiḥ sāṅga-pada-kramo'paniṣadaiḥ gāyanti yam sāmagāḥ:
dhyānā'vasthita-tad-gatena manasā paśyanti yam yogino
yasyāntam na viduḥ surāsura-gaṇā devāya tasmai namaḥ.*

Yam : Whom *Brahmā* : the creator *Brahmā Varuṇaḥ* : *Varuṇa Indra* : *Rudra* : *Rudra* *Marutaḥ* : the Maruts *stunvanti* : glorify *divyaiḥ* : by divine *stavaiḥ* : by hymns; *yam* : whom *sāmagāḥ* : singers of *Sāman sāṅga-pada-kramo'paniṣadaiḥ* : with complementary parts, sections and Upaniṣads *Vedaiḥ* : by Veda *gāyanti* : praise by chanting; *yam* : whom *yoginaḥ* : Yogins *dhyānā'vasthita-tad-gatena* : (with minds) concentrated in the state

paśyanti : intuit; *yasya* : whose *antam* : limit *surāsura-gaṇāḥ* : the hosts of Devas and Asuras *na viduḥ* : do not know *tasmai* : to that *devāya* to the Deva (the Supreme Being) *namaḥ* : my salutation.

My salutations to that Supreme Being, whom Brahmā, Varuṇa, Indra and Rudra glorify by divine hymns; whom singers of Sāman praise by chanting the Veda with all the complementary parts, sections and Upaniṣads; whom Yogins intuit with minds concentrated in meditation; and whose limit neither the hosts of Devas nor of Asuras know.

INTRODUCTION

A Bird's-Eye View of the Gita Teachings

The Appeal of the Gita

Among the world's scriptures, the *Bhagavad Gita* is one of the most popular texts. Its popularity is demonstrated by the fact that next to the Bible it is perhaps the most widely translated of scriptural texts, and in several languages, both Indian and foreign, its translations are to be counted in dozens. This tremendous general appeal of the *Bhagavad-Gita* was voiced forth in prophetic words by Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India (1773-85)—a personality one would least expect to deal with such a subject. In his Introduction to the first-ever English translation of the scripture by Charles Wilkins (1784), Hastings has remarked that “works as the *Gita* would live long after the British dominion in India has ceased to exist” and that it contains passages “elevated to a track of sublimity into which our habits of judgement will find it difficult to pursue.”

In India it has attracted the attention of all the Ācāryas (teachers) of the Vedānta philosophy, of which it is recognised as one of the three source books, ever since the great Sankarācārya wrote his commentary on it. Following Sankara, all the Ācāryas of the different schools of Vedānta wrote commentaries on this great text, each interpreting it in support of his own thesis. It has been given the status of an Upanishad, a revealed scripture embodying the quintessence of the Vedic revelation, as enunciated in the following oft-quoted verse: “All the Upanishads are the cows, the cowherd boy Krishna is the milker, Arjuna is the

calf, the pure-minded are the consumers, and the ambrosial *Gītā* is the delicious milk”.

It is not the ancient Indian thinkers alone, but also the leaders of modern times, that have taken it as a text for the exposition of their highest thoughts. Thus we have got in modern times Tilak's *Gītā Rahasya*, Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gītā* and Mahatma Gandhi's *Anāsakti Yoga* as examples of the continuing preference and admiration of the Indian mind for this great scriptural text of seven hundred verses.

What is the secret of this tremendous appeal of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*? Probably it consists in the fact that it deals with a practical problem of life, namely, how a man could discharge his duties as a member of an imperfect social order and at the same time realise his highest spiritual destiny envisaged by the sublime metaphysics and theology enshrined in the Vedic revelation. The *Gītā*, therefore, begins with an ethical problem, and in solving this problem, a noble devotional philosophy is expounded.

The Ethical Problem in the Gītā

The ethical problem is graphically depicted at the outset through the predicament of Arjuna. Arjuna is the leader of the Pāṇḍava host, and his whole life has been a preparation to meet his cousins, the Kauravas, in battle, defeat them, and wrest from them the kingdom they had usurped from himself and his brothers. The *Gītā* scene is cast in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra where the armies of both the sides have gathered, and Arjuna is called upon to fulfil his historic mission by leading his men against the army of the Kauravas. Arjuna realises at this critical moment that it is a fratricidal war, and that its consequence will be the destruction of the very friends and relatives for the sake of whom men usually seek wealth and kingdom, as well as the social chaos consequent on the holocaust of the flower of Kaurava and Pāṇḍava chivalry. A war-weariness and a world-weariness together come upon him with dramatic suddenness. Under their impact he forgets all his social and family obligations, and wants to take to an ascetic life instead of indulging in what he conceives to be a senseless carnage under the guise of duty

(Swadharma). He becomes a pacifist and a quietist all of a sudden.

The conflict here is between a sudden and purely personal inclination bursting on one's mind and a social duty, the avoidance of which under that inclination would have meant ruin to a whole community that had laid its trust in one. Sri Kṛṣṇa, though God incarnate, is Arjuna's friend, charioteer and spiritual counsellor, and he is called upon to resolve the conflict in Arjuna's mind and restore him to a sense of moral equilibrium by finding a new sanction for action.

Inevitability of Action in Life

In the protracted dialogue between the teacher and the disciple, the final answer to the problem is given only at the end, but the mind of Arjuna is prepared for it by a series of talks on the inexorable nature of work in the life of man and on the utter futility of Arjuna's resolve to withdraw from a life of action. Man's body and mind are parts of Prakṛti (Nature) which is dynamic in its constitution. As a product of Prakṛti, action is the law of life for the mind and the body, and the very process of living is impossible without it. And so its elimination can only mean practice of idleness according to one's convenience, and he who attempts it under a false impression of his spiritual greatness, will end in rank hypocrisy and spiritual stagnation. Only one, who has overcome the body idea completely and is established in the sense that he is not the body but the immortal, ever-conscious and ever-blissful Atman, can be actionless; for, he no longer identifies himself with the body, the product of Nature.

Besides, from the ethical point of view, every one with body-consciousness has to remember that he is living in a community of similar beings governed by a cyclic law of mutual exchange of services and commodities. If he does not contribute his share to it by means of work but enjoys the benefits of others' work for the maintenance and comfort of his own body, he lives the life of an exploiter and a thief. He has no moral basis and hence no spiritual progress.

Even in the case of a person who has been emancipated from identification with the body, it is better that he works. He has

not the compulsion of duty as in the case of the ignorant man, but he may feel the compulsion of love, which makes one work for *lokasamgraha* or world-welfare. His actions are not self-centred and so have no binding effect on him. Work therefore is the law of life for the ignorant, and an expression of love for the enlightened, the work of the former being self-centred and of the latter God-centred.

Doctrine of Niṣkama-Karma as the Panacea for the moral Conflict

But the two questions still remain: Actions like leading men in war have many evil consequences, though they may be part of one's duty. Is not avoidance of such duties better than doing them and incurring sin? How can their performance promote spiritual life at all? The ideal of the *Sthitaprajña* depicted in the *Gītā*—the ideal of a person who is absolutely indrawn and unperturbed, who is the master of the senses and mind—is so far removed from that of a soldier engaged in a form of dreadful action like war, that it looks incredible that *Swadharma* of that type can ever lead a man to that state of spiritual excellence. This doubt persists continually in Arjuna's mind in spite of Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to action.

In answer to this Sri Kṛṣṇa propounds the doctrine of *Niṣkāma-Karma*—the doctrine of actions done with detachment and in dedication to the Lord. Works in themselves are amoral, if we eliminate the self-centred agent from them. Nature's cataclysms with their terribly destructive effect cannot be classified as moral or immoral. They are amoral. All works are a mixture of beneficence and destructiveness as far as their effects are concerned. They are like the brilliance of fire, always accompanied by the obscuring cloudiness of smoke.

Work at the human level has various ramifications. There is work done under compulsion like slave labour, which may be characterised as sub-moral in its effect on the worker. Higher than that is work prompted by the profit motive (*kāmya-karma*), on which human civilisation as constituted today is based. *Kāmya-karma* can take two forms: On the one hand there is anti-social work which is technically denoted as *Vikarma* or

Adharma or *Niṣiddha-Karma*; on the other hand there is socially oriented action which is termed *Dharma*. Anti-social work is done by persons with demoniac nature. Everything they do is for ostentation and self-aggrandisement and no form of cruel exploitation and selfish indulgences is repugnant to them, provided their pleasure, profit and ambition are promoted thereby. Such anti-social beings are endowed with *Asuri-sampat* (demoniac nature) characterised by pride, greed, passion and cruelty. Moral and spiritual degradation is the wage for their sins. In contrast are men with *Daiṣisampat* (divine nature), who follow *Dharma* or socially oriented action. They too are self-centred and seek pleasure and power, the good things of life, but their pursuit of these is socially oriented and is regulated by norms that take others and their needs too into consideration. In return for what they seek and take, they are prepared to give away what is due from them. They observe the law of *Yajna*. They are *Dhārmikas*, men who too pursue pleasure and power but always subordinate such pursuit to a code of give and take based on a sense of collective good and of moral responsibility. When their sense of obligation to society dominates overwhelmingly over the demand for individual fulfilment, they become elevated into patriots, philanthropists, and votaries of similar other noble values of a collective nature.

Arjuna was in his early life a *Dhārmika* of this type, when he found himself all of a sudden in the predicament described earlier, wherein the old sanctions for action like *Swadharma* (or discharge of one's duty), socially approved pursuit of power and pleasure, communal welfare, patriotism etc., became meaningless as inducements for action. A new sanction had to be found if Arjuna were to take part in action, and this sanction, different even from the one applicable to the *Dhārmikas*, is expounded by the *Bhagavān*. It is the doctrine of *Niṣkāma-karma*, the doctrine of work without desire, applicable to men who seek only liberation (*Mumukshu*). In expounding it, a sublime theology and a devotional metaphysics are propounded as the spiritual rationale of such desireless action. For, then only the 'how' and the 'why' of desireless action will become clear. Without this spiritual basis, desireless action will only be an incomprehensible and a puzzling concept, as we cannot think of any action devoid of the

prompting of some desire or other. The main thoughts of the *Gītā* in these respects are as follows :

The Metaphysics and Theology of the Gītā

All Jīvas (individual spiritual centres) are sparks from the fire that is the Divine Vāsudeva. Not the Jīvas only but all other categories too. So Vāsudeva is the 'All' (*Vāsudevaḥ sarva-mitī*). How could that one Being be all and yet be Himself, His identity unimpaired? The *Gītā* theology answers this by the theory that the Supreme Being has two Prakṛtis or Powers of manifestation, which are aspects of Him, non-different yet distinct from Him. Power and Power-holder, though distinct, are not different. It is His Prakṛti that changes, not Himself. Speaking on this mystery of the Supreme Being manifesting as the universe of living and non-living beings, without himself undergoing any change, the *Gītā* says; "Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and egoism — this is Prakṛti. Different from this, O mighty armed one, know that higher Prakṛti of Mine in the form of the individual soul (Jīva) for whose growth and salvation this world cycle is sustained. Know that all beings have these two for their origin. I am the origin of the entire universe as also its destroyer. Higher than Myself there is nothing else, O Dhana-ñjaya. In Me all this is strung like gems on a string" (VII 4-7).

Again adverting to the non-involvement of the Lord in the universe, in spite of His being its material and efficient cause, the *Gītā* says, "All this is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form; all beings are in Me, but I am not in them. Nor are the beings in Me. Behold My divine mystery; though the sustainer and the protector of beings, I am Myself not in these beings. As the vast wind blowing everywhere ever abides in space, know that even so do all beings abide in Me. At the end of a cycle all beings, O son of Kānti, attain My Prakṛti, and at the beginning of the next cycle I again send them forth. Presiding over My Prakṛti, I again and again send forth this entire aggregate completely under the dominance of Prakṛti. These acts of creation etc., O Arjuna, do not bind Me, who remain unattached to them like one unconcerned" (IX 4-9).

While such is the cosmic stature of this Divine as depicted in the *Gītā*, He is also an intensely Personal Being, loving and beneficent, easily approachable through service and surrender. He is the same to all, and none is specially dear to Him or inimical. Those who cling to Him in adoration, they dwell in Him and He in them. Nor is He a far off being, a deistic God isolated from men and the world. He is the nearest of the near, being ever present in the hearts of all, vitalising their intellect, mind and body. "I am the father of this world," declares the God of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, "the mother, the protector, the grandsire, the one object to be known, the supreme purifier, the sacred sound symbol Om and the Vedas. I am the goal, the sustainer, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the source, the destroyer, the support, the repository and the eternal seed. I give heat, I restrain and release rain. I am immortality as also death. I am both Being and Becoming (IX 17-19)"; "In whatever way a man adores Me, that way I bless him. The paths men adopt everywhere are paths leading to Me (IV. 11)"; "He who with devotion offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, that devout offering of the pure-minded, I accept. Whatever you do, or eat, or sacrifice or give—whatever austerity you perform—that O son of Kunti, you do offer unto Me. Thus you will be rid of the bondage of action resulting in good and evil; being free and with your mind endowed with the Yoga of renunciation, you will attain Me. I am the same to all beings, there is no one hateful or dear to Me. But they who worship Me with devotion are in Me, and I also am in them. Even if a very wicked man happens to worship Me in deep devotion excluding all other loves, he should be regarded as righteous; for he has rightly resolved. He soon becomes righteous-minded and attains eternal peace. O son of Kunti, proclaim that my devotee never perishes." (IX 26-31)

The Theophany of the Lord

The God of love of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* is also the dispenser of death and destruction. For, creation, preservation, destruction and redemption go side by side. His theophany as Time the destroyer, of which Arjuna had the vision, is described as "Having many mouths and eyes, and containing many a wonder-

ful sight, with many heavenly ornaments, wielding many heavenly uplifted weapons, wearing celestial garland and apparel, anointed with heavenly perfumes, wondrous, resplendent, infinite and having faces on every side. If the effulgence of a thousand suns were to flash in the skies simultaneously, it might compare somewhat with the splendour of that great form. There the son of Pāpdu saw the entire universe with its manifold divisions united in the body of the God of gods. Then awed and wonderstruck, Arjuna said, adoring the Lord with joined palms: 'In Thy body, O Lord, I see the Devas, as also all the hosts of various beings, Brahma, the ruler seated on his lotus-seat, all the heavenly sages and serpents. I see Thee with many hands, bellies, mouths and eyes possessing infinite forms on every side. O Lord of the Universe, O Thou of universal form! I see, however, neither Thy end, nor middle, nor beginning...O Viṣṇu! Seeing Thee touching the sky, blazing, of many hues, with open mouth and fiery eyes, I am frightened at heart. All these sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra along with the hosts of kings, Bhīṣma, Drona, as also the charioteer's son (Karna) together with the principal warriors on our side are entering with a rush into Thy terrible jaws set with fearful teeth...As moths enter a blazing fire in a great hurry only to be destroyed, even so are these people also entering into Thy mouths with great speed just to be destroyed.'

Overpowered, awe-struck and exalted, Arjuna asks that 'Ferocious Form' to reveal His identity, and the Lord replies, "I am terrible Time (Kāla), the destroyer of peoples, and am here proceeding to destroy them. Even without you, all these warriors in every division shall cease to be...By Me alone all these have been killed already; be you merely an instrument."

Arjuna's Attainment of a Cosmic World-view and Resolution of Conflict

The experience of the above described Cosmic Form of the Lord opens up a new dimension before Arjuna. It resolves the difficulty he is faced with. Till now his life has been like that of an individual cell in a body which thinks, out of ignorance, that it is an independent entity, functioning on its own, while in truth it has been only a part of a whole, for whose energy it has been but a conduit and in fulfilment of whose purpose it has been functioning. In the human body such a cell

functioning apart from the life of the whole becomes a cancerous cell. Arjuna now feels that he has till now been such a cancerous cell in a spiritual sense, his outlook being based on self-centredness. He realises now that he is neither a solitary individual, nor merely a member of a society, but a cell in the mighty being of the Lord, with an apportioned piece of work to perform, not for his own sake, nor even for his community or country, but for the sake of Him to whom everything and everyone ultimately belongs — realises also that, residing within the hearts of all, He is turning the wheel of Time with all beings poised on it, and that to be in communion with this Cosmic Spirit with undivided devotion and to be discharging one's allotted functions without egotistic sense and in resignation to the Supreme Will, is the way to the peace of salvation.

In the light of this enlightened and enlarged world-view, work gains a new sanction and a new significance. Neither self-aggrandizement, nor even the service of any worldly cause is its ultimate purpose. The purpose is the spiritual development of man—to be freed from the hold of the body and realise one's kinship or unity with the Divine. For he, the Jiva, is a spark from the great Divine Fire, but identification with the body has effaced the sense of his inherent Divinity. This predicament of man, called ignorance, must be due to the will of the Divine, and only by the will or Grace of the Divine can he be redeemed from it. This grace descends on him who resigns himself to Him with his entire being—body, mind and soul. Discharge of the works that devolve on one as duty without any self-centred motive, but as an offering unto the Divine—to start with, of all results, and finally of agency too—is the way of this total resignation leading to enlightenment.

Works, too, cannot be accepted or shunned by any mere momentary considerations of their being good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable. All works, however good at first sight, carry some bad effects too, just as fire is always accompanied by smoke. In the Divine dispensation there are four character types, and the work appropriate to each of these types is called its Swadharma (natural duty). The four character types are called in the Indian tradition—Brāhmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. It has to

be emphasised again and again that these are not castes as they are unfortunately looked upon today, but character types evolved according to the Divine dispensation, having nothing to do with caste and community based on mere birth in certain families. The Brāhmana is the introvert type, reflective, intellectual and self-restrained and with the dominance of the Sattva element of Nature. The Kshatriya is the extrovert, flamboyant, lordly, pugnacious, chivalrous and possessed of qualities of leadership and having the dominance of Rajas in him. The Vaisya is the acquisitive type, industrious, organising, enterprising and conserving, with the elements of Rajas and Tamas in him. And the Sudra is the dull type, without enterprise or initiative, requiring direction from others, and fit only for routine subordinate work, mental and physical. The element of Tamas dominates him.

Works and ways of living, suited to these natures and in the line of their evolution, are their Swadharma, irrespective of what some may consider good or bad elements in them. For, as already pointed out, every work in this world will have these two elements of favourableness or unfavourableness to some one or other, but irrespective of that, they fall within the scope of Swadharma, provided they have social acceptability and are in the line of one's nature dictated by one's stage of evolution. For one who accepts and contemplates on the Divine world-view and the destiny of man as presented in the Gītā, the performance of such Swadharma with detachment and as an offering to the Divine is a potent means to spiritual evolution. By the offering of the fruits of his works man's sinful tendencies born of physical nature are effaced, and when he is able to resign his sense of agency too to Him, he realises the Whole as the Divine, in which His will alone is functioning through all individual centres of consciousness (Jīvas) spread in His being.

This supra-ethical vision of life is stated thus in thrilling language in the Gītā: "From whom proceeds the activity of all beings, and by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him through one's Swadharma, a man attains perfection. Better is one's Swadharma, though defective, than another's duty, apparently well performed. Doing the duty ordained by one's nature,

one incurs no sin. One should not, O son of Kunti, relinquish the duty born of one's nature, although it may be attended with evil; for all undertakings are covered by defects, as fire by smoke. He whose undertakings are unattached everywhere, whose mind is under control, who is bereft of desires, attains by renunciation that supreme state of freedom from action...Resigning mentally all actions, regarding Me as the supreme goal, and resorting to communion with your whole being, ever fix your mind on Me. Fixing your mind on Me, you will overcome all difficulties through My grace. But if from self-conceit you do not listen to Me, you will perish. If, indulging in self-conceit, you think, 'I will not fight', vain is that resolve of yours. Your nature will compel you to fight. O son of Kunti, what out of delusion you do not wish to do, you will do in spite of yourself, fettered by your own duty-born of your nature. In the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, resides the Lord, whirling all of them by His Maya as if they were mounted on a machine. Take refuge in Him alone with all your heart, O descendant of Bharata. By His grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal abode... Fix your mind in Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; bow down to Me. Then you shall come to Me. Truly do I promise you, for you are dear to Me. Giving up all other Dharmas, take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins, do not grieve."

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

<i>Sounds like</i>	<i>Sounds like</i>
अ a-o in son	ट t̥ -t in ten
आ ā-a in master	ठ th̥-th in ant-hill
इ i-i in if	ड ḍ -d in den
ई ī-ee in feel	ढ ḍh-dh in godhood
उ u-u in full	ण ṇ -n in under
ऊ ū-oo in boot	त t -t in French
ऋ ṛ-somewhat between r and ri	थ th̥ -th in thumb
ए e -ay in May	द d̥ -th in then
ऐ ai-y in my	ध dh̥-theh in breathe
ओ o-o in oh	न n̥ -n in not
औ au-ow in now	प p̥ -p in pen
क k̥ -k in keen	फ ph̥-ph in loop-hole
ख kh̥ -ckh in blockhead	ब b̥ -b in bag
ग g̥ -g (hard) in go	भ bh̥-bh in abhor
घ gh̥-gh in log-hut	म m̥ -m in mother
ङ ṅ-ng in singer	य y̥ -y in yard
च c̥ -ch (not k) chain	र r̥ -r in run
छ ch̥-chh in catch him	ल l̥ -l in luck
ज j̥ -j in judge	व v̥ -v in avert
झ jh̥-dgeh in hedgehog	श ṣ̥ -sh in reich (German)
ञ ñ̥ -n (somewhat) as in French	ष ṣ̥̣ -sh in show
	स s̥̣ -s in sun
	ह h̥ -in hot
	म m̥ -m in sum
	: h̥ -h in half

Chapter I

अर्जुन-विषाद-योगः

ARJUNA'S SPIRITUAL CONVERSION THROUGH SORROW

SUMMARY

The Significance of the Opening Chapter: The first chapter, depicting Arjuna's grief, is meant to show under what conditions man opens himself to the voice of the Spirit. A crisis is often required to make him turn his eyes to the spiritual reality. Often it is the impact of death, loss, disease, faithlessness of man, or any other such bitter experience of life that causes the awakening.

In the case of Arjuna, the hero who forms the central figure in this philosophical poem, it is not any of these but the naked display of man's cupidity and heartlessness that brings about the change of outlook. Trained to the profession of arms, and accustomed to the pursuit of power and pleasure, Arjuna has till now led the life of a respectable man of the world, seeking the good things of life and doing his ordained religious duties. Now when he is called upon to perform his historic duty of leading the armies of his clan against the usurping Kauravas, the moment of disillusionment comes to him on reflecting on the consequences of the fratricidal war and on the sordid and bloodstained prizes for which it is fought. He seeks shelter in his Divine Teacher Kṛṣṇa, who has been for him a friend and counsellor till now.

Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra: (1-47) The scene is laid on the battle-field of Kurukṣetra, also described as Dharma

Kṣetra, where the armies of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas are arrayed in battle formations to settle finally by the might of arms their respective claims to the common ancestral kingdom. After the first few verses, wherein a brief review of the leaders on both sides is made by Duryodhana, Arjuna appears on the scene in a chariot driven by Kṛṣṇa. Stationed in his chariot between the two armies, he finds on both sides close kith and kin and venerated persons like teachers and grandfathers standing ready to kill one another for the sake of power and pelf. The frightful consequences of a fratricidal war dawn on him in all vividness, and he feels it better to eat a beggar's food than enjoy wealth stained with the blood of persons related to him as sons, fathers, uncles, brothers-in-law, friends, grandfathers and teachers. Shocked at the prospect of a senseless carnage in which his own near and dear ones are going to be the victims, Arjuna decides to lay down arms, surrender the kingdom to the Kauravas, and even to court death at their hands, or, if he were to survive, to become an ascetic. He drops his weapons in a mood of depression caused by utter confusion as to what his duty is under such circumstances.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच—

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

Dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca :

Dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ ।

māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva kim akurvata, sañjaya ॥ १ ॥

Sañjaya : O Sañjaya! *dharmakṣetre :* in the sacred field *kurukṣetre :* in Kurukṣetra *yuyutsavaḥ :* eager to fight *samavetāḥ :* assembled *māmakāḥ :* my people *pāṇḍavāḥ ca :* and the followers of the Pāṇḍavas *eva :* indeed *kim akurvata :* what did they do?

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:

1. O Sañjaya! What indeed did my people and the followers of the Pāṇḍavas do after having assembled in the holy land of Kurukṣetra, eager to join battle?

सञ्जय उवाच—

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।

आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ 2 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca:

*Dr̥ṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṁ vyūḍhaṁ duryodhanas tadā ।
ācāryam upasaṅgamy rājā vacanam abravīt ॥ 2 ॥*

Tadā : Then *pāṇḍavānīkaṁ* : the army of the Pāṇḍavas *vyūḍham* : arrayed for battle *dr̥ṣṭvā* : having seen *rājā duryodhanaḥ* : king Duryodhana *tu* : indeed (for his part) *ācāryam* : the teacher (Droṇa) *upasaṅgamy* : having approached *vacanam* : word *abravīt* : said.

Sañjaya said:

2. Then seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas arrayed in battle order, king Duryodhana for his part approached the teacher Droṇa and spoke to him the following words:

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणां माचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।

व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ 3 ॥

*Paśyhitāṁ pāṇḍu-putrāṇām ācārya mahatīm camūm ।
vyūḍhāṁ drupada-putreṇa tava śiṣyena dhīmatā ॥ 3 ॥*

Ācārya : O teacher *dhīmatā* : talented *tava* : your *śiṣyena* : by disciple *drupadaputreṇa* : by the son of Drupada *vyūḍhām* : drawn for battle *pāṇḍuputrāṇām* : of the sons of Pāṇḍu *etīm* : this *mahatīm camūm* : great army *paśya* : behold.

3. O Teacher! Behold this great army of the sons of Pāṇḍu, arrayed in battle order by your talented disciple, the son of Drupada.

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ ४ ॥

*Atra śūrā maheṣvāsā Bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi ।
Yuyudhāno Virāṭaśca Drupadaś ca mahā-rathāḥ ॥ ४ ॥*

Atra : Here *śūrāḥ maheṣvāsāḥ* : valiant bow-men *yudhi* : in battle *Bhīmārjuna samāḥ* : equal to Bhīma and Arjuna *mahārathāḥ* : great car-warriors *Yuyudhānaḥ* : Yuyudhāna *Virāṭaś ca* : and Virāta *Drupadaś ca* : and Drupada;

4. Here (in that army) are many brave bow-men of note who are equal to Bhīma and Arjuna in battle—great car-warriors like Yuyudhāna, Virāta and Drupada;

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ ५ ॥

*Dhṛṣṭaketuś Cekitānaḥ Kāśi-rājaś ca vīryavān ।
Purujit Kuntibhojaś ca Saibyaś ca nara-puṅgavaḥ ॥ ५ ॥*

Dhṛṣṭaketuḥ Dhṛṣṭaketu Cekitānaḥ ca : and Chekitāna *vīryavān* *Kāśirājaś ca* : and the brave king of Kāśi *Purujit* : Purujit *Kuntibhojaś ca* : and Kuntibhoja *narapuṅgavaḥ saibyaś ca* : and Saibya the best of men.

5. Dhṛṣṭaketu, Çekitāna and the brave king of Kāśi; Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Saibya the best of men;

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६ ॥

*Yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta Uttamaujāś ca vīryavān ।
Saubhadro Draupadeyāś ca, sarva eva mahā-rathāḥ ॥ ६ ॥*

Vikrāntaḥ : Powerful *Yudhāmanyuḥ* : Yudhāmanyu *vīryavān* *Uttamaujāś ca* : and the brave Uttamauja *Saubhadraḥ* : the son of Subhadra *Draupadeyāś ca* : and the sons of Draupadi *sarve* : all *eva* : indeed *mahārathāḥ* : great car-warriors.

6. The powerful Yudhāmanyu, the brave Uttamauja, the son of Subhadra, and the sons of Draupadi—all these are indeed noted car-warriors.

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।

नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते ॥ 7 ॥

Asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tān nibodha dvij'ottama ।

nāyakā mama sainyasya saṁjñā'rtham tān

bravāmi te ॥ 7 ॥

Dvijottama : O best of Brāhmaṇās *asmākaṁ tu* : regarding our side *ye* : (those) who *viśiṣṭāḥ* : distinguished *mama* : my *sainyasya* : of the army *nāyakāḥ* : leaders *tān* : them *nibodha* : know. *Samjñārtham* : for your information *tān* : them *bravāmi* : I speak.

7. O best of Brāhmaṇās, I shall mention for your information the names of the distinguished leaders of our army.

भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिञ्जयः ।

अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिर्जयद्रथः ॥ 8 ॥

Bhavān Bhīṣmaś ca Karnaś ca Kṛpaś ca samitiñ-jayaḥ ।

Aśvatthāmā Vikarnaś ca Saumadattir Jayadrathaḥ ॥ 8 ॥

Bhavān : Yourself *Bhīṣmaś ca* : and Bhīṣma *Karnaś ca* : and Karna *samitiñ-jayaḥ* : victorious *Kṛpaś* : Kṛpa *Aśvatthāmā* : Asvatthāmā *Vikarnaś ca* : and Vikarna *Saumadattir* : the son of Somadatta *Jayadrathaś ca* : and Jayadratha

8. Yourself, Bhīṣma and Karna, the victorious Kṛpa, Aswatthāmā, Vikarna and Jayadratha, the son of Somadatta.

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।

नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्ध-विशारदाः ॥ 9 ॥

*Anye ca bahavaḥ sūrā mad-arthe tyakta-jīvītāḥ ।
nānā-śastra praharaṇāḥ sarve yuddha-viśārādāḥ ॥ 9 ॥*

Madarthe : For my sake *tyakta-jīvītāḥ* : who are ready to give up their lives *nānā - śastra - praharaṇāḥ* : who fight with various types of weapons *anye ca bahavaḥ* : also many other *sūrāḥ* : brave men (*santi* : there are). *Sarve* : all of them *yuddha-viśārādāḥ* : skilled in war.

9. These and many more brave men, who are ready to lay down their lives for my sake and who fight with various types of weapons, are present here. All of them are seasoned warriors.

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ 10 ॥

*Aparyāptam tad asmākaṁ balam Bhīsm'ābhirakṣitam ।
paryāptam tv idam eteṣāṁ balam Bhīm'ābhi rakṣitam ॥ 10 ॥*

Bhīsmābhirakṣitam : Defended by Bhīṣma *tad* : that *asmākaṁ* : our *balam* : army *aparyāptam* : inadequate; *Bhīmābhi rakṣitam* : defended by Bhīma *eteṣām* : their *balam* : army *tv* : while *paryāptam* : adequate.

10. Though numerically superior, inadequate is the army of ours defended by Bhīṣma, while theirs guarded by Bhīma is adequate.

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ 11 ॥

*Ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā-bhāgam avasthitāḥ ।
Bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi ॥ 11 ॥*

Bhavantaḥ sarve : All of you *eva hi* : even indeed *sarveṣu* : in all *ayaneṣu ca* : in divisions *yathā-bhāgam* : appropriate positions

avasthitāḥ : remaining *Bhīṣmam eva* : Bhīṣma *abhirakṣantu* : protect.

11. Therefore do ye all protect Bhīṣma remaining in appropriate positions in your respective divisions.

तस्य सञ्जनयन् हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।

सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ 12 ॥

Tasya sañjanayan harṣam Kuru-vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ ।
simha-nādaṁ vinady'uccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratā-
pavān ॥ 12 ॥

Tasya : His (Duryodhana) *harṣam* : cheer *sañjanayan* : causing *kuru-vṛddhaḥ* : oldest of the Kurus *pratāpavān* : valiant *pitāmahaḥ* : grand father *uccaiḥ* : aloud *simhanādam* : lion roar *vinadya* having sounded *śaṅkham* : conch *dadhmau* : blew

12. Cheering him up, the valiant grandfather Bhīṣma, the oldest of the Kurus, sounded a lion roar loudly and blew his conch-shell horn.

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पाणवानकगोमुखाः ।

सहस्रैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ 13 ॥

Tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca paṇav'ānaka-gomukhāḥ ।
sahas'air'ābhyahanyanta sa śabdas tumulo' bhavat ॥ 13 ॥

Tataḥ : Thereupon *sahasā eva* : suddenly *śaṅkhāḥ* : conchs *bheryaḥ* : kettle-drums *paṇavānaka gomukhāḥ ca* : and tabors, military drums and cowhorns *abhyahanyanta ca* : blared forth *saḥ* : that *śabdaḥ* : sound *tumulaḥ* : tremendous *abhavat* : was.

13. Thereupon, conchs, kettle-drums, tabors, military drums, and cowhorns all blared out suddenly, causing a tremendous sound.

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दनं स्थितौ ।

माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ 14 ॥

*Tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau ।
Mādhavaḥ Pāṇḍavaś c'aiva divyau śaṅkhau*

pradadhmatuḥ ॥ 14 ॥

Tataḥ : Then *śvetaiḥ* : with white *hayaiḥ* : horses *yukte* : yoked
mahati : in the great *syandane* : chariot *sthitau* : seated
Mādhavaḥ : Sri Kṛṣṇa *Pāṇḍavaś ca eva* : also the son of Pāṇḍu
(Arjuna) *divyau* : celestial *śaṅkhau* : conchs *pradadhmatuḥ* : blew.

14. Then Sri Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, seated in a great chariot with white horses yoked to it, blew their celestial conch-shell horns.

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।

पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ 15 ॥

*Pāñcajanyaṁ Hṛṣīkeśo Devadattaṁ Dhanañjayaḥ ।
Paunḍraṁ dadhmau mahā-śaṅkhaṁ bhīma-karmā*

Vṛk'odaraḥ ॥ 15 ॥

Hṛṣīkeśaḥ : Sri Kṛṣṇa *Pāñcajanyaṁ* : Pāñcajanya *Dhanañjayaḥ* :
Arjuna *Devadattaṁ* : Devadatta *bhīma-karmā* : one of terrible
deeds *Vṛk'odaraḥ* : Bhīmasena *mahāśaṅkham* : great conch *Paunḍram* :
Paundra *dadhmau* : blew.

15. Sri Kṛṣṇa blew his conch Pāñcajanya, Arjuna blew Devadatta, and Bhīma of terrible deeds sounded his great conch Paundra.

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।

नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ 16 ॥

*Anantavijayaṁ rājā Kuntī-putro Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ ।
Nakulaḥ Sahadevaś ca Sughoṣa-Manipuṣpakau ॥ 16 ॥*

Kuntīputraḥ rājā Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ : King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kunti *Anantavijayaṁ* : Anantavijaya *Nakulaḥ* : Nakula *Sahadevaḥ ca* : and Sahadeva *Sughoṣa-Manipuṣpakau* : Sughoṣa and Manipuṣpaka.

16. Raja Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kunti, blew his conch Anantavijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva, Sughoṣa and Manipuṣpaka respectively.

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ 17 ॥

*Kāśyaś ca param'eṣvāsaḥ Śikhandī ca mahā-rathaḥ ।
Dhṛṣṭadyumno Virāṭaś ca Sātyakiś c'āparājitaḥ ॥ 17 ॥*

Parameṣvāsaḥ : Great archer *Kāśyaś ca* : and the king of Kāśi *mahārathaḥ* : mighty car-warrior *Śikhandī ca* : and Śikhandī *Dhṛṣṭadyumnaḥ* : Dhṛṣṭadyumna *Virāṭaś ca* : and Virāṭa *āparājitaḥ* : invincible *Sātyakiḥ ca* : and Sātyaki.

17. The great archer, king of Kāśi, the mighty car-warrior Śikhandī and Dhṛṣṭadyumna and invincible Sātyaki,

द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान् दध्मुः पृथक् पृथक् ॥ 18 ॥

*Drupado Draupadeyāś ca sarvaśaḥ pṛthivī-pate ।
Saubhadraś ca mahā-bāhuḥ śaṅkhān dadhmuḥ pṛthak-
pṛthak ॥ 18 ॥*

Drupadaḥ : The king of Drupada *draupadeyāś ca* : and the sons of Draupadī *mahābāhuḥ* : strong armed *Saubhadraś ca* : and the

son of Subhadrā *sarvataḥ* : on all sides *prthivīpate* ; O King *prthak prthak* : again and again *saṅkhān* : conches *dadhmuh* : blew.

18. The King of Drupada, the sons of Draupadī, the mighty-armed son of Subhadrā—all these, O king, sounded their conch-shell horns again and again everywhere.

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।

नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥ 19 ॥

Sa ghoṣo Dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām hṛdayāni vyadārayat ।

nabhaś ca prthivīm c'aiva tumulo vyanunādayan ॥ 19 ॥

Tumulaḥ : Tumultuous *saḥ* : that *ghoṣaḥ* : uproar *nabhaś ca* : and sky *prthivīm ca* : and earth *eva vyanunādayan* : resounding *dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām* : of the followers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *hṛdayāni* : hearts *vyadārayat* : pierced.

19. That tumultuous uproar, resounding in the sky and over the land, pierced the hearts of the followers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

अथ व्यवस्थितान् दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।

प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ 20 ॥

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह मनीपते ।

Atha vyavasthitān dr̥ṣṭvā Dhārtarāṣṭrān kapi-dhvajaḥ
pravṛtte śastra-sampāte dhanur udyamya Pāṇḍavaḥ ।

Hṛṣīkeśam tadā vākyaṁ idam āha mahīpate ॥ 20-21 ॥

Mahīpate : O King *atha* : then *Kapīdhvajaḥ* : one with the monkey as the crest of his banner (Arjuna) *Pāṇḍavaḥ* : the son of Pāṇḍu *Dhārtarāṣṭrān* : the army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *vyavasthitān* : drawn up in battle *dr̥ṣṭvā* : seeing *śastrasampāte pravṛtte* : as the clash of weapons began *dhanuḥ* : bow *udyamya* : holding *tadā* :

then *Hṛṣīkeśam* : *Srī Kṛṣṇa idam vākyam* : following words
aha : said.

20-21. O King! Arjuna, the Pāṇḍava-leader with the banner
 crest of a monkey, on seeing the followers of Dhṛtarāṣṭra arrayed
 for battle and the clash of weapons about to start, held up his
 bow and said the following words to *Srī Kṛṣṇa* ;

अर्जुन उवाच—

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ 21 ॥

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।

कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥ 22 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpaya me' cyuta
yāvad etān nirikṣe' haṁ yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān ।

kair mayā saha yoddhavyaṁ asmin raṇa-samudyame ॥ 21-22 ॥

Acyuta : *Acyuta!* *me* : my *ratham* : chariot *ubhayoḥ* : of both *senayoḥ* :
 armies *madhye* : in the middle *sthāpaya* : station. *Yoddhukāmān* :
 desirous of fighting *avasthitān* : standing *etān* : these *yāvad* : while
aham : I *nirikṣe* : behold *asmin* : in this *raṇasamudyame* : eve of
 battle *mayā* : by me *kaiḥ saha* : with whom *yoddhavyam* : the
 battle should be fought.

Arjuna said :

21-22. O *Acyuta!* Please station my chariot between the two
 armies, so that I may have a view, on the eve of this battle, of
 all those standing ready to fight, and learn who all are the persons
 with whom I have to contend.

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।

घातराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ 23 ॥

Yotsyamānān avekṣe' ham ya ete'tra samāgatāḥ |
Dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher yuddhe priyacikīrṣavaḥ ||23||

Durbuddheḥ : of the evil-minded *Dhārtarāṣṭrasya*: of the son of *Dhārtarāṣṭra yuddhe* : in war *priyacikīrṣavaḥ* : desirous of favouring *ye ete*: all those *atra* : here *samāgatāḥ* : have arrived *tān* : them *yotsyamānān* : ready to fight *aham*: I *avekṣe*: let me see.

23. Let me see all those who have arrived to favour the evil-minded son of Dhārtarāṣṭra in war and are standing ready to join battle.

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
 सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ 24 ॥

भीष्म-द्रोण-प्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
 उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान् समवेतान् कुरुनिति ॥ 25 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca:

Evam ukto Hṛṣikeśo Guḍākeśena Bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye sthāpayitvā rath'ottamam || 24 ||

Bhīṣma-Droṇa pramukhataḥ sarveṣāṁ ca mahī-kṣitām
uvāca Pārtha paśy'aitān samavetān Kurūn iti || 25 ||

Bhārata : O Bhārata (O King Dhārtarāṣṭra) *Guḍākeśena* : by *Guḍākeśa*, conqueror of sloth (Arjuna) *evam* : thus *uktaḥ* : told *Hṛṣikeśaḥ* : Hṛṣikeśa, the conqueror of the senses (*Kṛṣṇa*) *ubhayor* : of both *senayor* : armies *madhye* in the middle *Bhīṣma-Droṇa-pramukhataḥ* : in front of Bhīṣma and Droṇa *sarveṣāṁ* of all *mahīkṣitām ca* : kings *rathottamam* : the best of chariots *sthāpayitvā* : having stationed *iti* : thus *uvāca* : spoke *Pārtha* : O Arjuna *samavetān* : assembled *etān* : these *Kurūn* : Kurus *paśya* : see.

Sanjaya said :

24-25. O King Dhṛtarāṣṭra! Sri Kṛṣṇa, to whom Arjuna addressed these words, stationed that most splendid of chariots at a place between the two armies, confronting Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all those chiefs, and said: "O Arjuna! See these men of the Kuru horde assembled for battle."

तत्रापश्यस्थितान्पार्थः पितृन्थ पितामहान् ।

आचार्यान् मातुलान् भ्रातृन् पुत्रान् पौत्रान् सखींस्तथा ॥ 26 ॥

श्वशुरान् सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।

तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान् बन्धून्वस्थितान् ॥ 27 ॥

कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

*Tatrāpaśyat sthitān Pārthaḥ pitṛn atha pitāmahān
ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn putrān pautrān sakhīmsthathā ॥26॥*

*Śvaśurān suhṛdaś caiva senayor ubhayor api
tān samīkṣya sa Kaunteyaḥ sarvān bandhūn avasthitān ॥27॥*

kṛpayā parayā'viṣṭo viśīdann idam abravīt

Tatra : there *ubhayor* : of both *senayor* : armies *api* : also *sthitān* : stationed *pitṛn atha* : and fathers *pitāmahān* : grandfathers *ācāryān* : teachers *mātulān* : uncles *bhrātṛn* : brothers *putrān* : sons *pautrān* : grandsons *sakhīn* : comrades *tathā* : and *śvaśurān* : fathers-in-law *suhṛdaḥ* : friends, *ca iva* : and *Pārthaḥ* : Arjuna *apaśyat* : saw *avasthitān* : stationed; *sarvān* : all *bandhūn* : relatives *samīkṣya* : having seen *sa* that *Kaunteyaḥ* : son of Kunti *parayā* : supreme *kṛpayā* : pity *āviṣṭaḥ* : filled *viśīdan* : sorrowing *idam* : thus *abravīt* : said.

26-27. There he saw standing in both the armies—fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, comrades, fathers-in-law and bosom friends. Seeing all these kinsmen arrayed, Arjuna was overcome with great pity, and said sorrowing:

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ 28 ॥

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ 29 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Dr̥ṣṭvemaṁ svajanam Kṛṣṇa yuyutsum samupasthitam

sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukham ca paśiṣyati

vepathuś ca śarīre me roma-harṣaś ca jāyate ॥28-29॥

Kṛṣṇa : O *Kṛṣṇa yuyutsum* : eager to fight *samupasthitam* : standing *imam* : this *svajanam* : groups of relatives *dr̥ṣṭvā* : seeing *mam* : my *gātrāṇi* : limbs *sīdanti* : give way *ca* : and *mukham* : mouth *paśiṣyati* : is parching, *me* : my *śarīre* : in the body *vepathuś* : trembling *ca* : and *romaharṣaś* : horripilation *ca* : and *jāyate* : arises.

Arjuna said:

28-29 Seeing these relatives standing eager to join battle my limbs are giving way, my mouth is parching. I get trembling of the body and horripilations.

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥ 30 ॥

Gāṇḍivam sraṁsate hastāt tvak c'aiva paridahyate

na ca śaknomy avasthātum bhramatī' va ca me manaḥ

॥ 30 ॥

Gāṇḍivam : the bow *Gāṇḍiva hastāt* : from the hand *sraṁsate* : is slipping *tvak ca eva* : skin too *paridahyate* : is burning *avasthātum* : to stand firm *na śaknomy* *ca* : not possible *me* : my *manaḥ* : mind *bhramatī iva* *ca* is reeling as it were.

30. My bow *Gāṇḍiva* is slipping from my hand. My skin too is burning. I find it impossible to stand firm, and my mind is, as it were, reeling.

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥ 31 ॥

Nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni Keśava

na ca śreyo' nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanam āhave ॥ 31 ॥

Keśava : O Keśava! *viparītāni* : adverse *nimittāni ca* : omens *paśyāmi* : I see *āhave* : in the war *svajanam* : one's own men (relatives) *hatvā* : having killed *anu* : afterwards *śreyaḥ* : good *na paśyāmi* : I do not see.

31. O Keśava! I see adverse omens. I do not feel that any good will come by killing all one's kinsmen in battle.

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥ 32 ॥

Na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ Kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca

kiṁ no rājyena Govinda kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā ॥ 32 ॥

Kṛṣṇa : O Kṛṣṇa! *vijayaṁ* : victory *na kāṅkṣe* : I do not desire *rājyaṁ ca* : neither the kingdom *sukhāni ca* : nor the enjoyments. *Govinda* : O Govinda *naḥ* : for us *rājyena* : with the kingdom *kiṁ* what (is to be achieved)? *bhogaiḥ* : by enjoyments *jīvitena vā* : by even life *kiṁ* : what (accrues)?

32. O Kṛṣṇa! I do not long for victory, or kingdom, or enjoyments. O Govinda! Of what use is kingdom, enjoyments or even life itself?

येषामर्थं काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।

त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥ 33 ॥

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।

मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः स्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥ 34 ॥

*Yeṣām arthe kāṅkṣitam no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca
ta ime' vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāms tyaktvā dhanāni ca*
॥ 33 ॥

*Ācāryāḥ pitaraḥ putrāḥ tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ
mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ syālāḥ sambandhinas tathā*
॥ 34 ॥

Yeṣām arthe : For whose sake *naḥ* : by us *rājyaṁ* : kingdom *bhogāḥ* : enjoyments *sukhāni ca* : and pleasures *kāṅkṣitam* : are desired, *te* : those *ācāryāḥ* : teachers *pitaraḥ* : fathers *putrāḥ* : sons *tatha eva ca* : and also *pitāmahāḥ* : grandfathers *mātulāḥ* : uncles *śvaśurāḥ* : fathers-in-law *pautrāḥ* : grandchildren *syālāḥ* : brothers-in-law *tathā sambandhinaḥ* : as well as relatives *ime* : these *prāṇān* : life *dhanāni ca* : and wealth *tyaktvā* : abandoning *yuddhe* : in battle *avasthitāḥ* : are stationed.

33-34. Those for whose sake kingdoms, enjoyments, and pleasures are desired,—those very teachers, fathers and sons, as also grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law and other relatives are here stationed in battle ready to give up their lives and possessions.

एताव हन्तुमिच्छामि प्रलोक्य मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्य-राज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ 35 ॥

*Etān na hantum icchāmi ghnatopi Madhusūdana
api trailokya-rājyasya hetoḥ kiṁ nu mahi-kṛte* ॥ 35 ॥

Madhusūdana : O Madhusudana *ghnataḥ api* : even if killed (by them) *etān* : them *trailokya-rājyasya* : for the three worlds *hetoḥ api* : even for the sake of *hantum* to kill *na icchāmi* : do not desire *mahi-kṛte kiṁ nu* : much less for this earth.

35. Even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, I do not desire to kill them, though myself killed — how much less then for this earthly kingdom !

निहत्य धर्तराष्ट्राजः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।

पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानात्ततायिनः ॥ 36 ॥

*Nihatya Dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kā prītiḥ syāj Janārdana
pāpam ev'āśrayed asmān hatv'aitān ātatāyinaḥ ॥ 36 ॥*

Janārdana : O Janārdana (*Kṛṣṇa*) *Dhārtarāṣṭrān* : the sons of *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* *nihatya* : having killed *naḥ* : for us *kā* : what *prītiḥ* : joy *syāt* : there would be? *Ātatāyinaḥ* : murderous felons *hatvā* : by killing *asmān* : for us *pāpam* : sin *eva* : only *āśrayet* : will accrue.

36. What joy can there be for us by killing these sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra? Though they are murderous villains, only sin will accrue to us by killing them.

तस्मान्नाहं वयं हन्तुं धर्तराष्ट्रान् स्वबन्धवान्

स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ 37 ॥

*Tasmān n'ārhaḥ vayaṁ hantum Dhārtarāṣṭrān
svabāndhavān
svajanam hi katham hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma Mādhava
॥ 37 ॥*

Tasmāt : Therefore *Mādhava* : O Mādhava (*Kṛṣṇa*)! *vayaṁ* : we. *svabāndhavān* : own relations *Dhārtarāṣṭrān* : sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *hantum* : to kill *na arhāḥ* : not justified : *svajanam* : relations *hatvā* : having killed *katham hi* : how *sukhinaḥ syāma* : could we be happy persons.

37. Therefore, O Mādhava! it is not befitting that we kill our relations, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. How could one be happy by the slaughter of one's own kinsmen?

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ 38 ॥

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनादंन ॥ 39 ॥

*Yady apy ete na paśyanti lobh'opahata-cetasah
kula-kṣaya-kṛtam doṣam mitra-drohe ca pātakam*

*katham na jñeyam asmābhiḥ pāpād asmān nivartitum
kula-kṣaya-kṛtam doṣam prapaśyadbhir Janārdana*
॥ 38-39 ॥

Janārdana : O *Janārdana lobhopahata cetasaḥ* : with the understanding destroyed by greed *ete* : these people *kulakṣaya-kṛtam* : due to the decay of families *doṣam* evil *mitradrohe* : in the persecution of friends *pātakam ca* : sin also *yadyapi* : though *na paśyanti* : do not see, *kulakṣaya-kṛtam* : done by the decay of families *doṣam* : evil *prapaśyadbhiḥ* : seeing well *asmābhiḥ* : by us *asmāt pāpāt* : from this sin *nivartitum* : to abstain from *katham* : why *na jñeyam* : not learn.

38-39. O Janārdana! Even if these people, with their intelligence overpowered by greed, do not see any evil in the decay of families and any sin in the persecution of friends, why should not we, who are aware of the evil of such decay of families, learn to desist from that sin?

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।

धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ 40 ॥

*Kula-kṣaye praṇaśyanti kula-dharmāḥ sanātanaḥ
dharme naṣṭe kulam kṛtsnam adharmo' bhībhavatyuta*
॥ 40 ॥

Kulakṣaye : By the decay of clans *sanātanaḥ* : ancient *kuladharmāḥ* traditions of the clan *praṇaśyanti* : perish; *dharme naṣṭe* : when tradition perishes *kṛtsnam* : entire *kulam* clan *adharmāḥ* : lawlessness *abhibhavati* : overcomes *uta* : indeed.

40. When a clan becomes decadent, its ancient traditions (laws) perish. When traditions perish, the entire clan is indeed overcome by lawlessness.

अधर्माभिभवत् कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।

स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वर्ण्ये जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥ 41 ॥

*Adharmābhibhavāt Kṛṣṇa pradusyanti kula-striyaḥ
striṣu duṣṭāsu Vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ ॥41॥*

Kṛṣṇa : O *Kṛṣṇa adharmābhibhavāt* : by the prevalence of lawlessness *kula-striyaḥ* : the women of the clans *pradusyanti* : become corrupt. *Vārṣṇeya* : O scion of the Vṛṣṇi! *striṣu duṣṭāsu* : when women become corrupt *varṇa saṅkaraḥ* : mixture of classes (promiscuity) *jāyate* : arises.

41. O Kṛṣṇa! When lawlessness prevails, the women of the clans become corrupt. O Scion of the Vṛṣṇi! When women are corrupted, mixture of classes (promiscuity) prevails.

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।

पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥ 42 ॥

*Saṅkaro narakāy'eva kula-ghnānām kulasya ca
patanti pitaro hy eṣām luṭṭa-piṇḍ'odaka-kriyāḥ ॥42॥*

Saṅkaraḥ : Admixture of classes (promiscuity) *kulaghñānām* : of the destroyers of the clan *kulasya ca* : also of clans *narakāya eva* : for hell only. *Hi* : For *eṣām* : of these *pitarah* : ancestors *luṭṭapiṇḍodaka-kriyāḥ* : being deprived of Pindas or offerings of rice balls and water *patanti* : fall.

42. Promiscuity results only in hell to those destroyers of the clans, as also to the members of the clan. For (being without legitimate progeny to perform obsequies), the spirits of their ancestors fall, deprived of the offerings of rice ball and water.

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।

उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ 43 ॥

*Doṣair etaiḥ kula-ghnānām varṇa-saṅkara-kāraakaiḥ
utsādyante jāti-dharmāḥ kula-dharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ*

॥ 43 ॥

Kulaghñānām : Of the ruiners of clans *varṇasaṅkarakāraakaiḥ* : causing promiscuity *etaiḥ doṣaiḥ* : by these misdeeds *śāśvatāḥ* : immemorial *jātidharmāḥ* : laws or traditions of communities *kuladharmāḥ* laws of the clans *ca* : and *utsādyante* : are destroyed.

43. By the misdeeds of these ruiners of clans and promoters of promiscuity, the immemorial traditions of the communities and clans are uprooted.

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।

नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुश्रुम ॥ 44 ॥

*Utsanna-kula-dharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām Janārdana
narake niyatam vāso bhavatītyanuşruma* ॥ 44 ॥

Janārdana : O Janārdana! *utsannakuladharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām* : for men who have lost all their family traditions (ancestral religion) *narake* : in hell *vāsaḥ* : residence *niyatam* : sure *bhavati* : is *iti* : thus *anuśruma* : we have heard.

44. O Janārdana! We have heard that residence in hell awaits men, the religious traditions of whose clans have been destroyed.

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।

यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ 45 ॥

*Aho bata mahat pāpam kartum vyavasitā vayam
yad rājya-sukha-lobhena hantum svajanam udyatāḥ*

॥ 45 ॥

Aho : Alas! *vayam* : we *mahat* : great *pāpam* : sin *kartum* : to commit *vyavasitāḥ* : resolved *yat* : that *rājyasukha lobhena* : by greed for the pleasures of kingdom *svajanam* : kinsmen *hantum* : to destroy *udyatāḥ* : prepared *bata* : also.

45. Alas! What great sin have we resolved to commit when we prepared ourselves to destroy our kinsmen out of greed for the pleasures of a kingdom!

यदि मामप्रतीकार-मशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।

धार्तराष्ट्र रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ 46 ॥

Tadi mām apratikāraṁ aśastraṁ śastra-pāṇayaḥ
Dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyuḥ tan me kṣemataraṁ bhavet

Aśastram : Without arms *apratikāram* : unresisting *mām* : me *śastrapāṇayaḥ* : armed with weapons *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* : the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *raṇe* : in battle *hanyuḥ yadi* if they kill *tat* : that *kṣemataram* : far better *bhavet* : would be *me* : for me.

46. Far better would it be for me if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, with weapons in hand, kill me in battle, unarmed and unresisting!

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।

विस्मृत्य सशरं चापं शोक-संविग्न-मानसः ॥ 47 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca:

Evam ukto'arjunaḥ saṁkhye rathopastha upāviśat
visṛjya śaśaram cāpam śoka-saṁvigna-mānasaḥ ॥47॥

Evam ukto : So saying *śokasaṁvignamānasaḥ* : with mind overwhelmed by grief *Arjunaḥ* : Arjuna *śaśaram cāpam* : bow along with arrows *visṛjya* : abandoning *rathopasthaḥ* : in the car seat *upāviśat* : sat down.

Sanjaya said:

47. So saying, Arjuna, with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow, abandoned his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot seat.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम
प्रथमोऽध्यायः ।

*Iti Śrīmad bhagavdgītās 'ūpanisatsu brahma-vidyāyām
yogaśāstre Sri Kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde
Arjuna-viṣāda-yogo nāma prathamo'dhyāyaḥ*

In the Bhagavad Gītā, which is an Upaniṣad, a text on Brahman-knowledge, a scripture of spiritual communion, and a dialogue between Sri Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, here ends the first chapter named *Arjunaviṣādayoga* (Arjuna's spiritual conversion through sorrow).

NOTES

All the great Indian commentators of the past have taken the background events of the Gītā and the personalities involved in it as historical. The Kurukṣetra war is supposed to have been fought in about 1400 B.C. according to the latest archaeological evidence as against the traditional date ascribing it to a time just before the beginning of Kali Era in 3102 B.C.

In modern times, however, there is a swing towards a symbolical interpretation of the background events. The most noteworthy among the modern upholders of this view is Mahatma Gandhi who opines: "The Gītā is not a historical discourse. A physical illustration is often needed to drive home a spiritual

truth. It is the description not of war between cousins but between two natures in us—the good and the evil."

The Mahatma could not but take this view, as he was a total pacifist, and believed that love and suffering undergone by oneself should be the only means of converting the enemy, and never violence. However noble this view might be, there will always be another section of thinkers who will hold that a surgical treatment is necessary where medical therapy is found ineffective, that there are cancerous developments in the body politic which will carry the disease all over the organism unless removed from the system by radical measures. Sri Kṛṣṇa, and in fact most of the Divine Incarnations of the Hindus, are on the side of this view. From the practical point of view also Kṛṣṇa was not a war-monger. He tried to settle the dispute between the two factions through the arts of diplomacy and conciliation, to the best of his abilities, and only when the doors of justice were completely closed, did he allow the issue to be settled by the might of arms.

The symbolical interpretation is not, however, in any way opposed or contradictory to the acceptance of historical validity. If we accept a Divine mind behind the great developments of history, there is no harm in reading divine purposes into the great incidents of life. When the events are gone with the ebbing away of time, it is only the lessons learnt from them and the interpreted understanding of these events that last in the mind of man. These surviving ideological contents of events alone belong to the realm of eternal values, while the events themselves are their temporal and fleeting forms. So the Mahābhārata war of history may very well be interpreted as the illustration in space and time of the eternal idea of a struggle between the Good and the Evil, which the Cosmic Mind conceives as the pattern of human evolution. Symbolism and history can therefore be complementary and not conflicting.

There have been other symbolical explanations of the context of the Gītā. One popular explanation is that it is an extension of the symbolism of the chariot described in the Kathopaniṣad. The human body is compared to the chariot, in which the soul of man is seated as the master of the chariot with the Buddhi as the

charioteer. The mind constitutes the reins, and the senses, the horses. The chariot is coursing through the battle-field of life, the Kurukṣetra. Stationed in that battle-field, the bewildered spirit of man represented by Arjuna occupying the chariot of the body, looks to the charioteer, the higher mind or the Buddhi, here represented by Kṛṣṇa, for advice, guidance and inspiration. The Gītā is the eternal dialogue going on between the ego and the higher mind in the personality of man struggling on the battle-field of life. There have been scholastic interpreters who give symbolic meaning to many of the principal interlocutors like Sañjaya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Duryodhana etc.

The significance of the chapter from the Vedāntic point of view, namely, that a thorough disillusionment with life as constituted in Nature is necessary for spiritual instruction to take effect, has been discussed in the summary at the beginning of the next chapter and in the general introduction.

Chapter II

संख्ययोगः

COMMUNION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

SUMMARY

Arjuna Seeking Refuge in Kṛṣṇa : (1-16) : To Arjuna thus overcome with pity for his doomed kith and kin, Śrī Kṛṣṇa administers a strong dose of reprimand, saying that his attitude befits only a eunuch and not a hero. But Arjuna's sorrow and confusion are so deep-rooted that the reprimand has no effect on him, and he continues in his attitude of self-pity, and finally takes refuge in Kṛṣṇa as a disciple, seeking solace and instruction.

The Immortal Atman : (17-25) : Śrī Kṛṣṇa recognises that Arjuna's recoiling from his duty of leading his forces stems from two presumptions in his mind. First, the people threatened with destruction are his own nearest kith and kin. This in turn has its basis in his blindness to the essential spiritual nature of man. Ignorance makes him equate man with his visible body, which in turn makes him think of death as total destruction. But the truth is that man's spirit is indestructible. Until man lives by this truth, there can be no abiding virtue in him. In order to bring this home to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa, at the very start of his discourse, expounds the high philosophy of Ātman in the following words : You pretend to be a wise man in speech, but your behaviour is like that of the most ignorant. Your sorrow is for persons who are not in need of it. A wise man takes death as a trifle. For, he knows that the Essence in man is the Ātman, the birthless, the deathless, the eternal Spirit, whom weapons cannot

cleave, fire burn, or air dry. Birth and death are only of the body and not of the Ātman, and the body in relation to the Ātman is like clothes one puts on and throws away; or like the passing stages of life like childhood, boyhood, youth and old age. Pleasant and painful experiences of life are passing episodes. A man who knows this and is never moved by pleasure and pain, by life and death, is alone wise and fit for spiritual freedom.

Death from the worldly Point of View : (26-39) : Even from the point of view of a worldly wise man, you need not feel sorry for these men. Death is natural to all embodied beings, and there is no use in sorrowing for this unavoidable occurrence. From the Unknown, life comes; for a short time it remains in the field of the known; and to the Unknown it goes back again. Of what use is man's wailing over this eternal process? On the other hand, if you avoid your responsibilities in this righteous war—a veritable portal to heaven for the valiant Kṣatriyas—every one will say that you have tucked tail for fear of death and fled away for life like a coward. To survive with the stigma of cowardice is worse than a hundred deaths. Dead in the field of battle, you will attain heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the earth. So arise and fight! And if you can practise even-mindedness in pain and pleasure, in success and failure, you shall not incur any sin by slaughter in battle.

The Gospel of Dedicated Work : (40-53) : Having reminded Arjuna of the real nature of man as the eternal Spirit, Sri Kṛṣṇa now proceeds to declare the disciplines by which one could gradually realise this Divinity inherent in oneself. For, it is a matter of realisation, and not mere talk. Sri Kṛṣṇa therefore teaches further as follows: "I taught you till now about the philosophy of the Ātman. Now hear from me about the doctrine of communion through work. This path is free from dangers and is easy to perform. It seeks to secure the one-pointedness of mind through detachment in work. Man is generally after many worldly enjoyments and ambitions, and, hearing that they could be secured through Vedic ritualism, he performs various ritualistic works, one after another, hoping for success. Though they may look like acts of piety, they are only expressions of pure worldliness. They make the mind restless and scattered. But if

you can work without an eye on their fruits, your mind will get more and more ingathered and concentrated gradually. The more we are motivated by selfish gains in our work, the more we get steeped in worldliness; and the more we work in a spirit of duty without caring for gains, the more shall we get spiritually oriented. You have therefore got the right only to work as a matter of duty, and not to expect any selfish gain from it, if you want to evolve spiritually. But lack of interest in selfish returns should never make you lethargic or slipshod in work. For, communion through work (Karma Yoga) consists in maximum efficiency combined with detachment. It is for this reason that Karma Yoga is described as 'skill in action.' A man who discharges his duty in the manner described, acquires neither merit nor demerit, but evolves spiritually and becomes fit to realise his real nature as the immortal and impervious Ātman. He attains to liberation from the trammels of ignorance. When one is free from longings for worldly enjoyments, one gains spiritual conviction and one's intelligence is established in steadiness."

The Man of Steady Wisdom: (54-72): Arjuna thereupon asks Kṛṣṇa how he could recognise a man who has attained to the state of 'steadiness of intelligence.' Kṛṣṇa replies: "Such a person, having abandoned all desires from his heart, is ever satisfied with the bliss that is in his higher self. Nothing external attracts him. He is unperturbed in misery and happiness alike. He is free from all attachments, fear and anger. He has such control over his senses that he can withdraw them inward in the presence of the objects that excite them, as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell. The hold of the senses on an ordinary man is very powerful. As a ship on the high seas is at the mercy of the winds, so is the intelligence of man at the mercy of sense objects. One who thinks longingly of sense objects develops attachment for them. Attachments, in turn, grow into strong desires and infatuation. Infatuation effaces man's sense of distinction between the proper and the improper, and he becomes a slave of his animal instincts—in fact he loses his rationality. So the control of the senses is the pathway to spiritual advancement, and the lack of it, to spiritual ruin. And he who is the absolute master of the senses—into whom the stimuli from sense objects

can enter without causing any perturbation, as rivers into the brimming ocean—he attains to the peace that passeth understanding. This is what is meant by being established in Brahman-consciousness. Attaining to it a man is never reborn.”

सञ्जय उवाच

तं तथा कृपयाऽऽविष्ट-मश्रुपूर्णाकुलेश्णम् ।
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्य-मुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥ १ ॥

Sañjaya uvāca

*Tam tathā kṛpayā'viṣṭam aśru-pūrṇākul'ekṣaṇam
viśīdantam idam vākyaṁ uvāca Madhusūdanaḥ ॥ 1 ॥*

Tathā : Thus *Kṛpayā* : by pity *āviṣṭam* : one overcome with *aśru-pūrṇākulekṣaṇam* : with eyes full of tears and with a bewildered look *viśīdantam* : sorrowing *tam* : him *Madhusūdanaḥ* : Sri Kṛṣṇa *idam* : this *vākyaṁ* : word *uvāca* : said.

Sañjaya said:

1. To him who was thus overcome with pity and whose eyes were full of tears and bore a bewildered look, Sri Kṛṣṇa spoke as follows:

श्री भागवानुवाच—

कुतस्त्वा कश्मल-मिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनार्यजुष्ट-मस्वर्ग्यं मकीर्तिकर-मर्जुन ॥ २ ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca

*Kutas tvā kaśmalam idam viṣame samupasthitam
anārya-juṣṭam asvargyam akīrtikaram Arjuna ॥ 2 ॥*

Arjuna: O Arjuna! *anāryajuṣṭam*: entertained by worthless men *asvargyam*: a bar to heaven *akīrtikaram*: bringing disrepute *idam*: this *kaśmalam*: loathsome stupidity *viṣame*: in this crisis *tvā*: you *kutaḥ samupasthitam*: whence come upon.

The Blessed Lord said

2. O Arjuna ! Whence has this loathsome stupidity come upon you in this crisis? It (this attitude) is unworthy of a noble personage; it is a bar to heaven and a cause of much disrepute.

क्लैव्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तवोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ 3 ॥

Klaibyam mā sma gamah Pārtha naitat tvayy

upapadyate ।

kṣudram hṛdaya-daurbalyam tyaktv'ottisṭha

paramtapa ॥ 3 ॥

Pārtha : O Arjuna! *klaibyam* : state of impotency, unmanliness *mā sma gamah* : do not attain to. *Etat*: This *tvayi*: in thee *na upapadyate* : is not fitting. *Kṣudram* : Base *hṛdayadaurbalyam* : faintness of heart *tyaktvā* : abandoning *paramtapa* : O dreaded hero *uttiṣṭha* : rise up.

3. O Pārtha! Yield not to unmanliness! It befits thee not. Abandoning this base faint-heartedness, rise up, O dreaded hero!

अर्जुन उवाच—

कथं भीष्म-महं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।

इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥ 4 ॥

Arjuna uvāca :

Katham Bhiṣmam qhaṁ saṁkhye Droṇam cā

Madhusūdana ।

iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi puj'ārhaṁ arisūdana

॥ 4 ॥

Madhusūdana : O Madhusūdana *Bhiṣmam Droṇam ca* : Bhiṣma and Droṇa *saṁkhye* : in battle *aham* : I *iṣubhiḥ* : with arrows *katham pratiyotsyāmi* : how shall attack, *tau* : they two *pujārhaṁ* : are worthy of worship *arisūdana* : O destroyer of foes

Arjuna said

4. O Kṛṣṇa! How can I attack Bhīṣma and Droṇa in battle with my arrows? They are, indeed, worthy of worship, O destroyer of foes!

गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्य-मपीह लोके ।
हत्वाऽर्थकामास्तु गुरुनिर्दिव
मुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ 5 ॥

*Gurūn ahatvā hi mahā'nubhāvān śreya bhoktum
bhaikṣyam api' ha loka
hatvā'rtha kāmāns tu gurūn ih'aiva bhuñjīya
bhogān rudhira-pradigdhān ॥ 5 ॥*

Mahānubhāvān : Venerable *gurūn* : teachers *ahatvā* : without killing *iha loka* : in this world *bhaikṣyam* : food got by begging *api* : even: *bhoktum* : to eat *śreyaḥ* : leading to one's good. *Gurūn* : Teachers *hatvā tu* : if killing *iha eva* : here itself *rudhirapradigdhān* : blood-smearred *arthakāmān* : power and pleasure *bhogān* : enjoyments *eva* : even *bhuñjīya* : enjoy (will have to enjoy).

5. It is indeed better to live here in this world on a beggar's fare than to prosper by killing these venerable teachers. The enjoyment of pleasure and power obtained through the slaughter of these teachers and elders will surely be bloodstained.

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ 6 ॥

*Na c'aitad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo yad vā jayema
yadi vā no jayeyuḥ ।
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas te' vasthitāḥ pramukhe
Dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ ॥ 6 ॥*

Yad vā : Whether *jayema* : we should conquer *yadi vā* : or that *naḥ* : us *jayeyuḥ* : they should conquer *katarat* : which of the two *naḥ* : for us *gariyaḥ* : better *etat* : this *na vidmaḥ* : we do not know. *Yān* : whom *hatvā* : having killed *na jijīviṣāmaḥ eva* : we shall not care to live at all *te dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* : these men on the side of Dṛtarāṣṭra *pramukhe* : in front (arrayed against) *avasthitāḥ* : stand.

6. We do not know which of the two (alternatives) will be the better — the one that we should conquer them or the other that they should conquer us. The men on the side of Dhritrāṣṭra, standing arrayed against us, are the very people after killing whom we should not care to live.

कार्पण्यदोषोपहत-स्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।

यच्छेयः स्यानिश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ 7 ॥

kārpanya-doṣ'opahata-svabhāvaḥ prcchāmi tvām
dharmasammūḍha-cetāḥ
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me śiṣyas te'
haṁ śādhi mām tvām prapannam ॥ 7 ॥

kārpanyadoṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ : One whose natural disposition has been vitiated by the sense of pity *dharmasammūḍhacetaḥ* : one with a mind in utter confusion regarding one's duty (*aham* : I) *tvām* : you *prcchāmi* : ask. *Yat* : whatever *me* : my *śreyaḥ* : good *syāt* : is *tat* : that *niścitaṁ* : for certainty *brūhi* : tell. *Aham* : I *te* : thy *śiṣyaḥ* : disciple, *tvām* : Thee, *prapannam* : taken shelter *mām* : me *śādhi* : instruct.

7. My natural disposition is vitiated by a sense of pity, and my mind is in utter confusion regarding my duty. Lord, I beg Thee: tell me with certainty what will lead to my good: I am Thy disciple. Instruct me, who have taken refuge in Thee.

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद् यच्छोक-मुच्छोषण-मिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ 8 ॥

*na hi prapaśyāmi mam'āpanudyād yac chokam
ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām
avāpya bhūmāu asapatnam ṛddham rājyam surāṇām
api c'ādhipatyam ॥ 8 ॥*

Bhūmau : In the world *asapatnam* : without enemies *ṛddham*
prosperous *rājyam* : kingdom *surāṇām* : of the Devas
ādhipatyam : overlordship *avāpya api* : even attaining *indriyāṇām*
senses *ucchoṣaṇam* : drying up *mama* : my *śokam* : grief *yat* :
what *apanudyāt* : can remove *tat* : that *na hi* : do not
prapaśyāmi : I see.

8. I do not find anything that can assuage this grief which numbs my senses. Neither the unchallenged lordship over a prosperous kingdom, nor even the overlordship of all the Devas can do so.

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्द-मुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ 9 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca

*Evam uktvā hr̥ṣīkeśam guḍākeśaḥ paramtapaḥ
na yotsya iti Govindam uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha ॥9॥*

Guḍākeśaḥ : Arjuna the conqueror of sleep *paramtapaḥ* : the scorcher of foes *hr̥ṣīkeśam govindam* : Kṛṣṇa the master of the senses *evam* : thus *uktvā* : having said, *na yotsye* : I will not fight *iti* thus *tūṣṇīm* : silent *babhūva ha* : became.

Sanjaya said

9. Addressing Sri Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses, Arjuna, though valorous and vigilant, said, 'I will not fight', and sat silent.

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
सेनयो-रुभयो-र्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥ 10 ॥

*Tam uvāca hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ prahasann iva Bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye viśīdantam idaṁ vacaḥ ॥ 10 ॥*

Bhārata : O Dhritarāṣṭra *ubhayoḥ* : of both *senayor* : armies
madhye : middle *viśīdantam* : sorrowing *tam* : him *hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ* :
Kṛṣṇa *prahaśan iva* : as if ridiculing *idaṁ vacaḥ* : this word
uvāca : said.

10. O King! To him who was thus sitting grief-stricken between the two armies (instead of fighting), Sri Kṛṣṇa said as if by way of ridicule.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

अशोच्या-नन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासू-नगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ 11 ॥

Srī Bhagavān uvāca

*aśocyān anvaśocas tvam prajñā-vādāṁś ca bhāṣase
gat'āsūn agat'āsūnś ca n'ānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ ॥ 11 ॥*

Aśocyān : Those who should not be moaned for *tvam* : you *anvaśocaḥ* : are moaning *Prajñāvādān* : words worthy of wise men
bhāṣase ca : you speak too. *Paṇḍitāḥ* : wise men *gat'āsūn* : the dead
agat'āsūn : living *ca* : and *na ānuśocanti* : bewail not.

The Blessed Lord said

11. You are moaning for those who should not be moaned for. Yet you speak like a wise man. The truly wise never weep either for the dead or for the living.

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ 12 ॥

*Na tvevāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvam n'eme jan'ādhipāḥ
nac'aiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayam ataḥ param*

aham : I *jātu* : at any time *na tu āsam* : did not even exist (*iti*: this) *na eva* : not indeed; *tvam* : you *na (āsiḥ iti)* did not exist *na* : not; *ime jan'ādhipāḥ na (āsan iti)* *na* : it is not that these kings ever did not exist; *ataḥparam* : hereafter *sarve vayam* : all of us *na bhaviṣyāmaḥ* : shall not exist (*iti ca na eva* : it is not at all so.)

12. Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor these rulers of men. Nor shall all of us cease to be hereafter.

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ 13 ॥

*Dehino' smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā
tathā dehāntara prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati* ॥ 13 ॥

Dehinaḥ : To the embodied soul *asmin dehe* : in this body *kaumāram* : childhood *yauvanam* : youth *jarā* : old age *tathā* : in the same way *dehāntaraprāptiḥ* change to another body. *Dhiraḥ* : A wise man *tatra* : by this *na muhyati* : is not deluded.

13. Even as the attainment of childhood, youth and old age is to one in this physical life, so is the change to another body (at death) for the embodied soul. Wise men are not deluded by this.

मात्रास्पर्शस्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्ण-सुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ 14 ॥

*Mātrā-sparśās tu Kaunteya śītoṣṇa-sukha-
duḥkhadāḥ
āgam'ūpāyino'nityās tāms titikṣasva Bhārata* ॥ 14 ॥

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī (Arjuna)! *mātrāsparśūḥ tu* : contact of the senses with their objects *śītoṣṇa sukha duḥkha* : producing cold and heat, pleasure and pain *āgamāpāyinaḥ* : now coming and now going *anityāḥ* : are impermanent. *Bhārata* : O Scion of the Bharata race! *tān* : them *titikṣasva* : bear patiently.

14. Contact of the senses with their objects generates cold and heat, pleasure and pain. They come and go, being impermanent. Bear with them patiently, O scion of the Bharata race!

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।

समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ 15 ॥

Yam hi na vyathayanty ete puruṣaṁ puruṣ'arṣabha
sama-duḥkha-sukhaṁ dhīraṁ so'mṛtatvāya
kalpate ॥ 15 ॥

Puruṣarṣabha : O leader of men! *ete* : these *samaduhkhasukham* : unperturbed alike in pleasure and pain *dhīraṁ yam puruṣaṁ* : the enlightened one whom *na vyathayanti* : do not distress *saḥ* : he *amṛtatvāya* : for immortality : *kalpate hi* : is fit indeed.

15. O leader of men! That enlightened one who is unperturbed alike in pleasure and pain, whom these do not distress — he indeed is worthy of immortality.

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ 16 ॥

N'āsato vidyate bhāvo n'ābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayor api dṛṣṭo'ntas tv anyos tattva darsibhiḥ ॥ 16 ॥

Asataḥ : of the unreal *bhāvaḥ* : existence *na vidyate* : is not, *sataḥ* : of the real *abhāvaḥ* : non-existence *na vidyate* : is not. *Anayoḥ ubhayoḥ* : of these two *api antaḥ tu* the final end, (truth) *tattva* : *darsibhiḥ* : by philosophers *dṛṣṭaḥ* : seen.

16. The unreal can never come into existence, and the real can never cease to be. The wise philosophers have known the truth about these categories (of the real and the unreal).²

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

विनाश-मव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्तुमर्हति ॥ 17 ॥

Avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idam tatam

vināśam avyayasy'āsyā na kaścīt kartum arhati ॥ 17 ॥

Yena : By what *sarvam idam* : all this *tatam* : pervaded *tat tu* : that *avināśi* : indestructible *viddhi* : know. *Avyayasya asya* : of this immutable *vināśam* : destruction *kartum* : to effect *kaścīt na arhati* : no one is able.

17. Know that Reality, by which everything is pervaded, to be indestructible. No one can cause the destruction of this immutable Being.

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।

अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारता ॥ 18 ॥

Antavanta ime dehā nityasyo'ktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ

anāśino'prameyasya tasmād yudhyasva Bhārata ॥ 18 ॥

Nityasya : Eternal *anāśinaḥ* : indestructible *aprameyasya* : immeasurable, unlimited *śarīriṇaḥ* : of the indweller of the body, spirit *ime dehāḥ* : these bodies *antavantaḥ* : with end, perishable *uktāḥ* : are said to be. *Tasmāt* : therefore *Bhārata* : scion of the Bharata race *yudhyasva* : do you fight.

18. What is said to perish are these bodies, in which the imperishable and unlimited Spirit is embodied. Therefore fight, O scion of the Bharata race !

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।

उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ 19 ॥

*Ya enam vetti hantāraṁ yaśc'ainam manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate* ॥ 19 ॥

Yaḥ : Who *enam* : him *hantāraṁ vetti* : know as the killer *yaḥ enam* : who him *hatam* : killed *manyate* : knows as *tau ubhau* both of them *na vijānītaḥ* : do not know the real truth. *Ayam* : He *na hanti* : does not kill *na hanyate* : is not killed.

19. He who thinks him (the Self) to be the killer, and who experiences him (the Self) as the killed — both of them know not. He (the Self) neither kills nor is killed.

जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ 20 ॥

*Na jāyate mriyate vā kadācīn-nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā
na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yaṁ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne
sarīre* ॥ 20 ॥

Ayam : He, this Self *kadācit* : at any time *na jāyate* : is not born *na mriyate* : does not die. *Ayam* : he, the Self, *bhūtvā* : once coming into existence *bhūyaḥ* : again *na bhavitā vā na* : does not afterwards cease to be. *Ajaḥ* : Unborn *nityaḥ* : eternal *śāśvataḥ* permanent *purāṇaḥ* : primeval *sarīre* : body *hanyamāne* : when killed *na hanyate* : is not killed.

20. He (this Self) has neither birth nor death. Nor does he cease to be, having been in existence before; unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval, he is never killed when the body is killed.

वेदाऽविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।

कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥ 21 ॥

*Ved'āvināśinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam
katham sa puruṣaḥ Pārtha kam ghātayati hanti kam ॥21॥*

Pārtha : O Arjuna! *enam* : this (Self) *nityam* : eternal *avyayam* : undecaying; *ajam* : birthless *avināśinam* : indestructible *yaḥ* : who *veda* : knows, *saḥ puruṣaḥ* : that person *katham* : how *kam* whom *hanti* : kills *kam* : whom *ghātayati* : causes to slay.

21. O Arjuna! know this self to be eternal, undecaying, birthless and indestructible. A person who knows him to be so — how and whom can he kill, how and whom can he cause to be killed?

*वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ 22 ॥*

*Vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni grhṇāti naro'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyanyāni samyāti navāni dehī*

Naraḥ : Man *yathā* : as *jīrṇāni* : old *vāsāṁsi* : garments *vihāya* : abandoning *navāni* : new *aparāṇi* : other (clothes) *grhṇāti* : takes, *tathā* : in the same way *dehī* : the embodied self *jīrṇāni* : decrepit *śarīrāṇi* : bodies *vihāya* : abandoning *navāni* : new *anyāni* : other bodies *samyāti* : enters, assumes.

22. Just as a man gives up old garments and puts on new ones, so the embodied self abandons decrepit bodies and assumes new ones.

*नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ 23 ॥*

*Nainam chindanti śastrāṇi nainam dahati pāvakaḥ
na c'ainam kledayanty āpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ ॥ 23 ॥*

Enam : Him *śastrāṇi* : weapons *na chindanti* : cut not; *enam* : Him *pāvakaḥ* : fire *na dahati* : burns not; *enam* : Him *āpaḥ* : waters *na kledayanti* : wet not; *mārutaḥ* : wind *na śoṣayati* : dries not.

23. Him the weapons cleave not; Him the fire burns not; Him the waters wet not; Him the wind dries not.

अच्छेद्योऽय-मदाह्योऽय-मक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणु-रचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ 24 ॥

*Acched.yo'yam adāhyo'yam akledyo' sosya eva ca
nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇuḥ acalo'yam sanātanaḥ ॥ 24 ॥*

Ayam : He *acchedyaḥ* : is uncleavable; *ayam* : He *adāhyaḥ* is unburnable; *ayam* : He *akledyaḥ* : is unwettable; *asosyaḥ eva ca* : and also undriable; *ayam* : He (is) *nityaḥ* : everlasting, *sarvagataḥ* : all-prevading, *sthāṇuḥ* : immovable, *acalaḥ* motionless, *sanātanaḥ* : eternal.

24. He cannot be cut or burnt. He can neither be wetted nor dried. Eternal, all-pervading, immovable and motionless, He is the same for ever.

अव्यक्तोऽय-मचिन्त्योऽय-मविकार्योऽय-मुच्यते ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितु-मर्हसि ॥ 25 ॥

*Avyakto'yam acintyo'yam avikāryo'yam ucyate
tasmād evam viditv'ainam n'ānusocitum arhasi ॥ 25 ॥*

Ayam avyaktaḥ : He is unmanifest (to the senses), *ayam acintyaḥ* : He is inconceivable, *ayam avikāryaḥ* : He cannot be subjected to change, *iti ucyate* : so it is said; *tasmāt* : therefore *enam* : Him *evam* : in this way *viditvā* : having known *anusocitum* : to mourn for *na arhasi* : you are not fit (should not).

25. Knowing Him (the Self) to be unmanifest, inconceivable, and unmodifiable, it is improper to mourn for Him.

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।

तथापि त्वं मदाबाहो नैनं शोचितु-मर्हसि ॥ 26 ॥

*Atha c' enam nitya-jātaṁ nityaṁ vā manyase mṛtaṁ
tathāpi tvam mahā-bāho n'ainaṁ śocitum arhasi* || 26 ||

Athavā : In the alternative *enam* : Him (Self) *nityajātam* : frequently born *nityaṁ mṛtaṁ ca* : and frequently dying *tvam* : you *manyase* : think, *tathā api* : even then *mahābaho* : O mighty armed! *tvam* : you *evam* : like this *śocitum* : to mourn *na arhasi* . not proper.

26. In the alternative, even if you hold him (the Self) to be subject to constant births and deaths, there is no justification, O mighty armed, for your mourning for him. ^a

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ 27 ॥

*Jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca
tasmād aparihārye'rthe na tvam śocitum arhasi* || 27 ||

Jātasya : For the born *mṛtyuḥ* : death *dhruvaḥ hi* : sure indeed, *mṛtasya* : for the dead *janma ca* : birth too *dhruvaṁ* : sure; *tasmād* therefore *aparihārye arthe* : in the inevitable matter or situation *tvam* : you *śocitum* : to sorrow for *na arhasi* : do not deserve. (should not).

27. For the born, death is unavoidable, and for the dead birth is sure to take place. Therefore in a situation that is inevitable, there is no justification for you to grieve.

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्त-मध्यानि भारता ।
अव्यक्त-निधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ 28 ॥

*Avyakt'ādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni Bhārata
avyakta-nidhanāny eva tatra kā paridevanā* || 28 ||

Bhārata : O Arjuna! *bhūtāni* : beings *avyaktādīni* : mysterious in their origin, *vyakta madhyāni* : clear in their middle, *avyakta nidhanāni eva* : mysterious or unmanifested again in the end *tatra* : in this *kā* ; what *paridevanā* : grief.

28. Mystery surrounds the origin of beings. Mysterious too is their end. Only in the interim between birth and death are they manifested clearly. Such being the case, what is there to grieve about?

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन आश्चर्यवद्ब्रूति तथैव चान्यः ।

आश्चर्यवच्चैन-मन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येन वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥29॥

*Āścaryavat paśyati kaścit enam āścaryavad vadati tath'aiva
c'anyaḥ
āścaryavad c'ainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti śrutvā'py enam veda na
c'aiva kaścit ॥ 29 ॥*

Kaścit : Some one *enam* : Him *āścaryavat* : as a marvel *paśyati* : sees, *tathā eva ca* : in the same way *anyaḥ* : another *āścaryavat* : as a marvel *vadati* : speaks *anyaḥ ca* : still another *enam* : Him *āścaryavat* : as a marvel *śṛṇoti* : hears. *Śrutvā api ca* : Even on hearing *na kaścit* : no one *veda eva* : knows at all.

29. Some have a glimpse of Him as a marvel, some speak of Him as a marvel, and yet others hear of Him as a marvel. Yet none understands Him in truth, in spite of (seeing, speaking and) hearing about Him.

देही नित्य-मवद्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।

तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोभितुमर्हसि ॥ 30 ॥

*Dehī nityam avadhyo'yaṁ dehe sarvasya Bhārata
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvam śocitum arhasi ॥ 30 ॥*

Sarvasya dehe : In the bodies of all *ayaṁ dehī* : this embodied spirit (the soul) *nityam* : always *avadhyaḥ* : indestructible. *Tasmāt* : Therefore *sarvāṇi bhūtāni* : all beings *tvam* : you *śocitum* : to mourn *na arhasi* : does not befit.

30. At no time can the Spirit embodied in all beings be slain. Therefore there is no reason for you to grieve for any one.

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ 31 ॥

*Svadharmam api c'āveksya na vikampitum arhasi
dharmyād dhi yuddhāc chreyo'nyat kṣatriyasya na
vidyate ॥ 31 ॥*

Svadharmam : One's own Dharma (duty) *api ca* : further *aveksya* : considering *vikampitum* : to falter *na arhasi* : ought not *Kṣatriyasya* : for the Kṣatriya *dharmyāt yuddhāt* : than a righteous war *śreyah* : good *anyat* : any other *na vidyate hi* : does not exist.

31. Further, even from the point of view of one's own duty, you ought not to falter. There is no greater good for a Kṣatriya than what a righteous war offers.

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्ध-मौदशम् ॥ 32 ॥

*Yadṛcchayā c'opapannaṁ svarga-dvāram apāvṛtam
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ Pārtha labhante yuddham
īdṛśam ॥ 32 ॥*

Pārtha : O Arjuna! *Yadṛcchayā* : by chance *upapannam* : come *apāvṛtam* : opened *svargadvāram* *ca* : gate of heaven *īdṛśam* *yuddham* : a battle like this (*ye*) *Kṣatriyāḥ* : whichever Kṣatriyas *labhante* : obtain (*te* : they) *sukhinaḥ* happy.

32. O Arjuna! That Kṣatriya must indeed be a happy man to whom comes unsought a war like this, which is an open gate to heaven.

अथ चेत्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिञ्च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 33 ॥

*Atha cet tvam imam dharmyam saṅgrāmam na kariṣyasi
tataḥ svadharmam kīrtim ca hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi ॥ 33 ॥*

Aiha : But *dharmyam* : righteous *imam* : this *sangrāmam* : war *tuam* : you *na kariṣyasi* : do not engage in, *tataḥ* : by that *svadharmam* : one's own duty *kīrtim* : reputation *ca* : and *hivā* : abandoning *pāpam* : sin *avāpsyasi* : shall incur.

33. If you do not take part in this righteous war, you will incur sin, besides failing in your duty and forfeiting your reputation.

अकीर्तिञ्चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्ति-मरणा-दतिरिच्यते ॥ 34 ॥

Akīrtim c'āpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te' vyayām sambhāvitasya c'ākīrtir. maraṇād atiricyate ॥ 34 ॥

Api ca : Besides *bhūtāni* : beings *te* : your *avyayam* : everlasting *akīrtim* : dishonour *kathayiṣyanti* : proclaim. *Sambhāvitasya* : for one honoured *akīrtiḥ* : dishonour *marañāt* : than death *atiricyate ca* : exceeds.

34. Besides, every one will speak ill of you for all time. More poignant than death is disrepute to a man accustomed to be honoured by all.

भयाद्रणा-दुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ 35 ॥

Bhayād raṇād uparatam maṁsyante tvām mahā-rathāḥ yeṣām ca tvām bahu-mato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam ॥ 35 ॥

Mahārathāḥ : Great car-warriors *tvām* : you *bhayāt* : out of fear *raṇāt* : from battle *uparatam* : turned back *maṁsyante* : will regard. *Tvam* : you *yeṣām* : whose *bahumataḥ bhūtvā* : having been the object of respect *lāghavam* : lightness, *yāsyasi* : will receive.

35. The great car-warriors will consider you as having fled from battle out of fear, and you who have been the object of their respect, will be despised by them hereafter.

अवाच्य-वादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।

निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥ 36 ॥

*Avācya-vādāṁś ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tav' āhitāḥ
nindantas tava sāmāthyam tato duḥkhataram nu kim ॥ 36 ॥*

Tava : Your *ahitāḥ* : enemies *tava* : your *sāmāthyam* : ability, prowess *nindantaḥ* : slandering *bahūn* : many *avācya-vādān* : improper words *vadiṣyanti* : will speak; *tataḥ* : than that *duḥkhataram kim nu* : what is more painful?

36. Your enemies will indulge in derogatory speeches against you, belittling your prowess. What is more painful than that?

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।

तस्मा-दुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ 37 ॥

*Hato vā prāpsyasi svargam jitvā vā bhoksyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha Kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta-niścayaḥ ॥ 37 ॥*

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *hataḥ vā* : if killed *svargam prāpsyasi* you will attain heaven, *jitvā vā* : if victorious *mahīm* : the kingdom *bhoksyase* : you will enjoy. *Tasmāt* : therefore *yuddhāya* for battle *kṛtanīścayaḥ* : having resolved *uttiṣṭha* : arise.

37. O son of Kuntī! If killed in battle you will attain heaven; if victorious you will enjoy the kingdom. Therefore arise, resolved to fight.

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पाप-मवाप्स्यसि ॥ 38 ॥

*sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābh'ālābhau jay'ājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva n'aivam pāpam avāpsyasi ॥ 38 ॥*

Sukhaduḥkhe : Pleasure and pain *same kṛtvā* : considering alike *lābhālābhau* : gain and loss *jayājayau* : victory and defeat

(same *krtvā* : considering alike) *tataḥ* : afterwards *yuddhāya* : for battle *yujyasva* : be ready. *Evam* : Thus *pāpam* : sin *na avāpsyasi* shall not incur.

38. Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, be ready for battle. Thus you will not incur any sin.

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु ।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥ 39 ॥

Eṣā te'bhīhitā sām̐khye buddhir yoge tvīmām śṛṇu
buddhyā yukto yayā Pārtha karma-bandham prahāsyasi

Pārtha : O Pārtha! *te* : to you *abhīhitā* : declared, imparted *eṣā* : this *sām̐khye buddhiḥ* : Truth according to the path of knowledge. *Yoge tu* : according to Yoga (the path of selfless action) *īmām* : this *śṛṇu* : hear. *Yayā* : By which *buddhyā yuktaḥ* : endowed with conviction *karmabandham* : bondage of works *prahāsyasi* : abandon.

39. O Arjuna! What has been declared to you is the Truth according to the Sām̐khya (the path of knowledge). Listen now to the teaching of Yoga (the path of selfless action combined with devotion)⁵ by practising which the bondage of Karma is overcome.

नेहाभिक्रम-नाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ 40 ॥

n'eh'ābhikrama-nāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svālpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt ॥ 40 ॥

Iha : Here, in this path of Yoga *ābhikramānāśaḥ* : loss due to incomplete effort *na asti* : does not exist. *Pratyavāyaḥ* : sin due to failure *na vidyate* : does not accrue. *Aya dharmasya* : of this

Dharma *svalpam api* : even a little *mahataḥ* : from great *bhayāt* : fear *trāyate* : rescues.

40. In this path of Yoga — the path of selfless action combined with devotion — no effort is lost due to incompleteness and no contrary effect of an adverse nature is produced due to failures. Even a little observance of this discipline saves one from great fear.

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।

बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥ 41 ॥

Vyavasāy'ātmikā buddhir ek'eha Kuru-nandana

bahu-śākhā hy anantāś-ca buddhayo'vyavasāyinām ॥ 41 ॥

Kurunandana : O Arjuna : *iha* : in this (path of selfless action) *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ* : the understanding or determinative faculty which produces conviction *eka* : rests in a single objective. *Avyavasāyinām* : In men without conviction (in the spiritual verity) *buddhayaḥ* : intelligence *bahusākhāḥ* : many-branched *anantāḥ ca* : and endless.

41. O Arjuna! In those following this path, the Buddhi (the understanding) that has the nature of producing conviction, is directed towards a single objective. In those without any spiritual conviction, the understanding gets scattered and pursues countless ends. *

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।

वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति-वादिनः ॥ 42 ॥

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्म-फलप्रदाम् ।

क्रियाविशेष-बहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ 43 ॥

भोगैश्वर्य-प्रसक्तानां तयापहत-चेतसाम् ।

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ 44 ॥

*Yām imām puṣpitām vācam pravadanty aviṣācitāḥ
vedavāda-ratāḥ Pārtha nānyad astīti vādināḥ* || 42 ||

*Kām'ātmānaḥ svarga-parāḥ janma-karma-phalaprādām
kriyā-viśeṣa-bahulām bhog'aiśvarya-gatiṁ prati* || 43 ||

*Bhog'aiśvarya-prasaktānām tayā'pahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāy'ātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate* || 44 ||

Pārtha : O Arjuna! *Vedavādaratāḥ* : those who delight in the eulogistic statements of the Vedas *na anyat asti* : there is nothing but that *itī vādināḥ* : who argue like this, *kāmātmānaḥ* : who have their mind full of desires, *svargaparāḥ* : who look upon heaven as the highest end, *aviṣācitāḥ* : (those) foolish men, *bhogaiśvarya gatiṁ prati* : which are directed towards the attainment of enjoyments and power, *janmakarma phalaprādām* : which yield rebirth as the fruit of actions, *Kriyā viśeṣa bahulām* : which are full of descriptions of ritualistic works *puṣpitām yām imām vācam* : whichever florid texts *pravadanti* : expatiate upon *tayā* : by them *apahṛta-cetasām* : with their minds stolen away *bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām* : those who are full of cravings for enjoyments and power *samādhau* : in the mind *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ* : steadfast wisdom *na vidhīyate* : is not established.

42-44. O Arjuna! There are people who delight in the eulogistic statements of the Vedas and argue that the purport of the Vedas consists in these and nothing else. They are full of worldly desires; paradise is their highest goal; and they are totally blind in a spiritual sense. They expatiate upon those florid Vedic texts which describe the means for the attainment of pleasure and power, which provide attractive embodiments as the fruits of actions, and which are full of descriptions of rites and rituals (through which these fulfilments are obtained). In the minds of these votaries of pleasure and power, addicted to enjoyments of the above description, steadfast wisdom (capable of revealing the Truth) is never generated.

त्रैगुण्य-विषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्य-सत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ 45 ॥

*Traiguṇya viṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattvastho niryogakṣema ātmavān ॥ 45 ॥*

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *vedāḥ* : the Vedas *traiguṇya viṣayāḥ* : deal with the three dispositions (Guṇas) of Nature—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, *Tvam* : you *nistraiguṇyaḥ* : beyond the influence of the three Guṇas *nirdvandvaḥ* : beyond the pair of opposites (like pain and pleasure, heat and cold etc), *nityasattvasthaḥ* : ever steady in purity *niryogakṣemaḥ* : unmindful of acquiring and preserving *ātmavān* : established in the spirit.

45. O Arjuna! The Vedas deal with material ends. But you be established in the Spirit, in the immutable purity of it, having abandoned all material values, attachment to possessions and concern with the contraries of life like pleasure and pain, heat and cold. *

यावानर्थं उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।

तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ 46 ॥

*Yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ sampluta'odake
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ ॥ 46 ॥*

Sarvataḥ : Everywhere *samplutodake* : flooded with water *udapāne* : in a small water receptacle (pond) *yāvān* : as much *arthaḥ* : use *vijānataḥ* : of the knowing *brāhmaṇasya* : for a Brāhmaṇa *sarveṣu Vedeṣu* : in all Vedas *tāvān* : that much.

46. What use a pond has got when a whole country is flooded, that much use only the Veda has got to a Brāhmaṇa who is full of wisdom. *

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ 47 ॥

*Karmany ev'ādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo'stu akarmaṇi* ||47||

Te : Your *adhikārah* : competence *karmaṇi eva* : in action only
kadācana : ever *phaleṣu mā* : should not be in fruits. *Karma phala-*
hetuḥ : with fruits of action as the motive force *mā bhūh* : should
not be. *Akarmaṇi* : in inaction *te* : your *saṅgaḥ* : attachment *mā*
astu : let not be.

47. To work alone you have competence, and not to claim
their fruits. Let not the longing for fruits be the motive force of
your action. At the same time let not this attitude confirm you
in indolent inaction. 19

योगस्यः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्धसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ 48 ॥

*Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā dhanāñjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga ucyate* ||48||

Dhanāñjaya : O Arjuna! *tvam* : you *yogasthāḥ* : with mind steadfast
in Yoga *saṅgam* : attachment *tyaktvā* : abandoning *siddhyasiddh-*
yoḥ : in success and failure *samaḥ bhūtvā* : being alike *karmāṇi kuru*
do actions. *Samatvam* : evenness of mind *yogaḥ (iti) ucyate* : is
called Yoga.

48. Engage yourself in action with the mind steadfast in Yoga.
Abandon attachments, O Arjuna, and be unperturbed in
success and failure. This unperturbed sameness in all conditions
is Yoga.

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥ 49 ॥

*Dūreṇ hy avaram karma buddhi-yogād dhanāñjaya
buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpāṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ* ||49||

Dhanañjaya : O Arjuna! *buddhiyogāt* : than action done with the Buddhi (intellect, mind) held in Yoga (evenness) *karma* : mere action *dūreṇa* : far *avaram hi* : inferior indeed. *Buddhau* : In unperturbed sameness of mind *śaraṇam* : refuge *anviccha* : seek. *Phalahetavaḥ* : One whose motive is the fruits of one's action *kṛpā-pāḥ* : pitiable.

49. O Arjuna, mere action (with attachment) is far inferior to action done with the mind poised in evenness. Seek shelter in this state of unperturbed evenness (which can arise only in a desireless mind in communion with the Divine). Those who work for selfish gains are indeed pitiable.

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥ 50 ॥

Buddhiyukto jahāti'ha ubhe sukr̥ta-duṣkṛte

tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam ॥ 50 ॥

Buddhiyuktaḥ : One endowed with unperturbed evenness of mind *ubhe* : both *sukṛtaduṣkṛte* : good and bad actions *iha* here *jahāti* : abandons. *Tasmāt* : Therefore *yogāya* : for this state of Yoga *yujyasva* : strive. *Yogaḥ* : Yoga *karmasu* : in action *kauśalam* : skill.

50. One endowed with this unperturbed evenness of mind abandons the effects of both good and bad actions even here itself. Therefore strive for this state of Yoga. Yoga is skill in action.

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।

जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ 51 ॥

Karmajam buddhi-yuktā hi phalam tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ
janma-bandha-vinirmuktāḥ padam gacchanty anām-

ayam ॥ 51 ॥

Buddhiyuktāḥ : Those endowed with unperturbed evenness of mind *manīṣiṇaḥ* : wise men *karmajam* : born of action *phalam* : fruits

tyaktvā : having abandoned *janma bandha vinirmuktāḥ* : free from entanglement in the cycle of births and deaths *anāmayam* : free from sorrow *padam* : state *gacchanti* attain to.

51. Wise men, established thus in the unperturbed evenness of mind, abandon the fruits of action, free themselves from entanglement in the cycle of births and deaths, and attain to the state of freedom from all sorrow (liberation).

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।

तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥ 52 ॥

Tadā te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitarisyati

tadā gantā'si nirvedam śrotavyasya śrutasya ca ॥ 52 ॥

Tadā : When : *te* your *buddhiḥ* : understanding *mohakalilam* : evil of delusion *vyatitarisyati* : crosses beyond, *tadā* : then *śrotavyā* : what has yet to be heard (i. e. experiences yet to be had) *śrutasya ca* : what has already been heard (i.e. experiences already undergone) *nirvedam* : indifference *gantāsi* : will attain to.

52. When you have overcome the delusions of your understanding sprung from self-centred attachments, then you will attain to a state of indifference towards all the past experiences and for the others yet to be had. ¹¹

श्रुति-विप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।

समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 53 ॥

Śrutī-vipratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścalā

samādhāv acalā buddhiḥ tadā yogam avāpsyasi ॥ 53 ॥

Śrutīvipratipannā : Distracted by various scriptural doctrines *te* : your *buddhiḥ* : intellect *yadā* : when *niścalā* : steady, firm *samādhau* : in Samadhi (introspection; Atman) *acalā* : unwavering *sthāsyati* : will remain *tadā* : then *yogam* : true Yoga *avāpsyasi* : will attain.

53. When your intellect, fed up with the bewildering scriptural doctrines and their interpretations, settles (finally) in steady and unwavering introspection (in the spirit), then you will attain to real Yoga.¹²

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।

स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत् ब्रजेत किम् ॥ 54 ॥

Arjuna uvāca

*Sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhi-sthasya Keśava
sthita-dhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta kim āsīta vrajeta kim ॥ 54 ॥*

Arjuna said:

Keśava : O Kesava! *sthitaprajñasya* : of a man of steady wisdom *samadhisthasya* : of one of deep introspection *bhāṣā kā* : what is the description. *Sthitadhiḥ* : A man of steady wisdom *kim prabhāṣeta* : how does he speak? *Kim asita* : how does he sit? *Kim vrajeta* : how does he walk?

54. O Kesava! What is the description of a person who has attained to steady wisdom and deep introspection? How does he speak? How does he sit? How does he walk? (How does he behave in life in general ?)

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ 55 ॥

Srī Bhagavān uvāca

*Prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān Pārtha mano-gatān
ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñas tado'cyate ॥ 55 ॥*

The Blessed Lord Said

Pārtha : O Son of Prithā! *yadā* : when *manogatān* : contained in the mind *sarvān kāmān* : all desires *prajahāti* : abandons *yadā* : when

ātmanā : by the Atman *ātmani eva* : in the Atman only *tuṣṭaḥ* : satisfied, *tadā* : then *sthītaprajñāḥ* : a man of steady wisdom *ucyate* : one is spoken of as.

55. O Son of Prithā When all the desires of the heart have been abandoned, and the Spirit finds joyous satisfaction in Itself (without dependence on any external factor) — then is one spoken of as a person of steady wisdom.

श्री भगवानुवाच—

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ 56 ॥

Duḥkheṣu anudvigna-manaḥ sukheṣu vigata-spr̥hāḥ
vīta-rāga-bhayakrodhaḥ sthita-dhīr munir ucyate ॥ 56 ॥

Duḥkheṣu : In suffering *anudvignamānāḥ* : with mind not agitated, *sukheṣu* : in pleasure *vigataspr̥hāḥ* : without desire, *vītarāga bhaya-krodhaḥ* : devoid of attachment, fear and anger, *munīḥ* : a sage *sthītadhīḥ* : steady-minded *ucyate* is called.

56. Whose mind is not agitated in adversity, who is free from desire, and who is devoid of attachments, fear and anger—such a person is called a sage of steady wisdom.

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।

नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 57 ॥

Yaḥ sarvatr'ānabhisnehas tat-tat prāpya subh'āsubham
n'abhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ 57 ॥

Yaḥ : Who *sarvatra* : everywhere *anabhisnehaḥ* : without self-centred affections *tat tat* : whatever *subh'āsubham* : good and evil (favourable and unfavourable situations) *na abhinandati* : rejoices not *na dveṣṭi* : hates not *tasya* : his *prajñā* : wisdom *pratiṣṭhitā* : is firmly set.

57. Whoever is without self-centred affection for anything, who rejoices not in favourable situations and hates not in unfavourable ones — such a person's wisdom is firmly set.

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेष्वस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 58 ॥

*Yadā samharate cāyaṁ kūrmo'ṅgāni'va sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇi'ndriy'ārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ 58 ॥*

Kurmaḥ : Tortoise *sarvaśaḥ* : on all sides *aṅgāni iva* : like its limbs
ayam : he *indriyārthebhyas* : from objects of senses *indriyāṇi* : organs
yadā : when *samharate ca* : withdraws *tasya* : his *prajñā* : wisdom
pratiṣṭhitā : is firmly set.

58. When a person can withdraw his senses from their objects just like the tortoise its limbs on all sides, his wisdom is firmly set.

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।

रसवजं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ 59 ॥

*Viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
rasa-varjaṁ raso'py asya param dṛṣṭvā nivartate ॥ 59 ॥*

Nirāhārasya : Of the abstinent *dehinaḥ* : embodied soul (Jīva)
rasavarjam : barring the taste : *vinivartante* : fall away. *Asya* : His
rasaḥ api : even taste *param* : the Supreme Truth *dṛṣṭvā* : having
seen (known) *nivartate* : falls away.

59. From the abstinent soul sense objects fall away, but not the taste for them. When the Supreme Truth is realised, even the taste departs.¹³

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥ 60 ॥

*Yatato hy api Kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ
indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhaṁ manaḥ ॥ 60 ॥*

Hi : Indeed! *Kaunteya* : O Son of Kunti *yatataḥ* : the striving
vipaścitaḥ : the discerning *puruṣasya* : of the man *manaḥ* : mind *api* :
even *pramāthīni* : turbulent *indriyāṇi* : senses *prasabham* : violently
haranti : draw away.

60. O son of Kuntī! The turbulent senses do violently draw away the mind of even a discerning person who is earnestly striving in the spiritual path.

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।

वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 61 ॥

*Tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsita mat-parah
vase hi yas'yendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā* ॥ 61 ॥

Tāni sarvāṇi : All of them *saṁyamya* : having controlled *yuktaḥ* : steadfast *mat-parah* : wholly devoted to Me *āsita* : should remain *yasya* : whose *indriyāṇi* : senses *vase hi* : are under control *tasya* : his *prajñā* : wisdom *pratiṣṭhitā* : is firmly set.

61. Having controlled them all, one should become entirely devoted to Me. He whose senses are under control, his wisdom is firmly set.

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ 62 ॥

*Dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgaś teṣū'pajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho' bhijāyate* ॥ 62 ॥

Viṣayān : Sense objects *dhyāyataḥ* : dwelling longingly in the mind *puṁsaḥ* : of one *teṣu* : for them *saṅgaḥ* : attachment, inclination towards *upajāyate* : arises, *saṅgāt* : out of inclination *kāmāḥ* : desire *sañjāyate* : is born, *kāmāt* : out of desire *krodhaḥ* : anger *abhijāyate* : grows.

62. In one who dwells longingly on sense objects, an inclination towards them is generated. This inclination develops into desire; and desire begets anger.

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥ 63 ॥

*Krodhād bhavati saṁmohaḥ sammohāt smṛti-vibhramāḥ
smṛti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati* ॥ 63 ॥

Krodhāt : Out of anger *sammohaḥ* : delusion, *saṁmohaḥ* : out of delusion *smṛti-vibhramah* : loss of memory, *smṛti-bhramasat* : from loss of memory *buddhi nāśaḥ* : ruin of the discriminative power, understanding *buddhināśāt* : from ruin of understanding *praṇaśyati* : one is destroyed.

63. Anger generates delusion, and delusion results in loss of memory. Loss of memory brings about the destruction of discriminative intelligence, and loss of discriminative intelligence spells ruin to a man. ¹⁴

रागद्वेष-वियुक्तैस्तु विषया-निन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।

आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसाद-मधिगच्छति ॥ 64 ॥

Rāga-dveṣa-viyuktais tu viṣayān indriyaiś caran
ātma-vaśyair vidhey'ātmā prasādam adhigacchati ॥ 64 ॥

Tu : But *vidheyātmā* : one with a disciplined mind *rāga-dveṣa-viyuktaiḥ* : devoid of attachment and aversion *ātmavaśyaiḥ indriyaiḥ* : with senses under one's control *viṣayān caran* : approaching sense objects *prasādam adhigacchati* : attains serenity, tranquillity.

64. A man of disciplined mind, who has his senses under control and who has neither attraction nor aversion for sense objects, attains tranquillity, though he may be moving amidst objects of the senses.

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानि-रस्योपजायते ।

प्रसन्न-चेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥ 65 ॥

Prasāde sarva-duḥkṣhānām hānir asyo'pajāyate
prasanna-cetaso hy āśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate ॥ 65 ॥

Prasāde : On attaining tranquillity (serenity) *asya* : his *sarvaduḥkṣhānām* : of all sorrows *hāniḥ* : end, destruction *upajāyate* : takes place. *hi* : for *prasannacetasah* : of the man of tranquillity *buddhiḥ* : intellect *āśu* : quickly *paryavatiṣṭhate* : remains steady.

65. On attaining tranquillity all one's sorrows come to an end. For soon does the intellect of a tranquil person become steady.

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।

न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥ 66 ॥

*Nāsti buddhir ayuktasya na c'ā yuktasya bhāvanā
na cā bhāvayataḥ śāntir aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham ॥ 66 ॥*

Ayuktasya : Of the uncontrolled *buddhiḥ na asti* : faith or spiritual comprehension does not exist, *ayuktasya* : of the uncontrolled *bhāvanā ca na* : there is no meditation also, *abhāvayataḥ* : for the unmeditative *śāntiḥ ca na* : there is no peace, *aśāntasya* : of the one without peace *kutaḥ* : wherefrom *sukham* : happiness.

66. A man of uncontrolled senses has no spiritual comprehension. He has no capacity for meditation either. For the unmeditative there is no peace. And where is happiness for one without peace of mind? ¹¹

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नाविमिवांसि ॥ 67 ॥

*Indriyāṇāṃ hi caratām yaṃ mano'nuvidhīyate
tat asya harati prajñāṃ vāyur nāvām ivāmbhasi ॥ 67 ॥*

Caratām : Moving, wandering *indriyāṇām* : among the senses *yaḥ* : whichever *manah* : mind *anuvidhīyate* : follows, *tat* : that *asya* : of that mind *prajñāṃ* : discriminative power *ambhasi* : upon the waters *nāvām* : ship *vāyur iva* : like wind *harati hi* : carries off.

67. The senses are naturally disposed to move towards their objects. Whichever of these senses the mind pursues, that sense carries away that mind as a gale does a ship on the high seas.

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 68 ॥

*Tasmād yasya mahā-bāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ
Indriyāṇi'ndriy'arthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥ 68 ॥*

Mahābāho : O mighty Arjuna! *tasmāt* : therefore *yasya* : whose *indriyāṇi* : senses *sarvaśah* : completely *indriyārthebhyaḥ* : from all sense objects *nigṛhitāni* : are restrained *tasya* : his *prajñā* : wisdom *pratiṣṭhitā* : is firmly set.

68. Therefore, O mighty Arjuna, he who could completely restrain his senses from pursuing their objects, has his wisdom firmly set.

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ 69 ॥

Yā niśā sarva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ ॥ 69 ॥

Sarvabhūtānām : Of all beings *yā niśā* : what is night *tasyām* : in that *saṁyamī* : the self-controlled one *jāgarti* : is awake. *Yasyām* : In what *bhūtāni* : all beings *jāgrati* : are awake *sā* : that *paśyato* : enlightened *muneḥ* : of the sage *niśā* : night.

69. What is like night to all ignorant beings, to that Atman-consciousness the self-controlled sage is awake; and the sensate life to which all ignorant beings are awake, that is like night to this illumined sage.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

Āpūryamāṇam acala-pratiṣṭham samudram āpaḥ
praviśanti yadvat
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve sa śāntim āpnoti na
kāma-kāmī ॥ 70 ॥

Āpūryamāṇam : Ever being filled, *acala-pratiṣṭham* : immobile and steady *samudram* : sea *āpaḥ* : waters *yadvat* : in what way *praviśanti* : enter *tadvat* : in that way *sarve kāmāḥ* : all desires *yaṁ* : in whom *praviśanti* : enter *saḥ* : he *śāntim* : peace *āpnoti* : attains, *na* : not *kāmakāmī* : one who longs for objects of desire.

70. He into whom all objects of desire enter (unsought and causing no perturbation), even like the ocean that is ever being filled by the rivers but still remains steady within its bounds — such a person attains to peace, not he who runs madly after objects of desire.

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निस्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ 71 ॥

*Vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumāns carati niḥsṛṣṭaḥ
nirmamo nirahankāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati ॥ 71 ॥*

Taḥ : Whichever *pumān* : man *sarvān* : all *kāmān* : desires *vihāya* : abandoning *niḥsṛṣṭaḥ* : without longing *nirmamaḥ* : without the feeling of 'mine' *nirahankāraḥ* : without the sense of 'I' *carati* : goes about *saḥ* : he *śāntim* : peace *adhigacchati* : attains.

71. Whoever has abandoned desires, and moves about without attachments and the sense of 'I' and 'mine' — he attains to peace.

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।

स्थित्वास्या मन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥ 72 ॥

*Eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ Pārtha n'ainām prāpya vimuhyati
sthitvā'syām antakāle'pi brahma-nirvāṇam ṛcchati ॥ 72 ॥*

Pārtha : O son of Prithā *brāhmī sthitiḥ* : state of dwelling in Brahman *eṣā* : this is. *Enām prāpya* : Attaining to this state *na vimuhyati* : is not deluded; *antakāle api* : even at the end of one's life *asyām* therein *sthitvā* : abiding *brahmanirvāṇam* : oneness with Brahman *ṛcchati* : attains

72. This, O son of Prithā, is the state of dwelling in Brahman. Having attained it, one is no more deluded. By abiding in that state even by the time of death, one is united with Brahman.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे

श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे सांख्ययोगो नाम

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥

NOTES

1. *Vr. 3:* This is an exhortation following the Gospel of Spiritual Strength based on the philosophy of the immortal Ātman as the Essence in man. So long as man feels he is the body and nothing but the body, he lives in fear and sorrow. He stands up in real strength, shaking off all fear and sorrow, when his sense of individuality is shifted from the body to the Spirit. This verse expresses concisely the practical consequences of accepting the doctrine of the Ātman expounded in the succeeding verses of the chapter.

2. *Vr. 16:* This and the verses preceding it up to the 12th and those succeeding up to the 25th, deal with the topic of the immortality of the Ātman, the Essence in man. A general principle in support of the doctrine is laid down in this verse. If we take the words Sat and Asat as real and unreal, and Bhāva and Abhāva as existence and non-existence literally as logical contradictions, the sentence will only involve repetition, adding nothing to the problem posed. The Asat or the unreal cannot be totally non-existent like the horn of a hare which is only a wordy figment incapable of being experienced and there is no meaning in the denial of the 'coming into being' of such an entity. So the coming into being of Asat or non-entity, means the changing forms of things we experience. These forms are experienced but they disappear immediately and give place to new forms, which too disappear. These changing forms are called Asat, non-existent, in the sense that they have no ultimacy in themselves. They come and go, and if all the forms cease, they leave no residue, except Sat or Essence, the changeless Being, the substratum on which all forms appear. The Sat or Essence is Changeless Being, Awareness or Witness of change.

Now while a general philosophy of Being and Becoming can be spun out of the verse, the context limits the meaning of the term Sat to the Ātman in the human personality and Asat to the body-mind. The former is the changeless Awareness or Witness, the Essence in man, while the latter is the changeful body which

the Ātman assumes when He is embodied. Now in the embodied state the Ātman appears to be one with the body, just as the light within several coloured glasses seem to be one with the glasses in spite of its distinct identity, or just as electricity appears as one with the field in which it manifests for the time being, in spite of its distinction from the field. After all man, when he thinks of himself, can do so only as a body-mind and nothing more. This is the state of ignorance, when man is not aware of his real nature as the Sat, the Ātman, but feels his self-hood entirely in the Asat, the body-mind. The *Tattvadarśī* (Truth-seer or philosopher) spoken of in the verse is the man of enlightenment who has succeeded in distinguishing between these and recognising his true identity with the immortal Ātman whose nature is graphically described in several passages as 'Him the weapons cleave not' etc. What is required of a *Tattvadarśī* is not a mere intellectual understanding but an intuitive conviction which is expressed in life as the capacity for detachment that is described in the section on *Sthitā-prajñā* or man of steady intelligence.

On the subject of the Asat or the body, one has to keep in mind the distinction between the *Sūkṣma-śarīra* (subtle body) and the *Sthūlaśarīra* (the gross body). The gross body is the one that changes from birth to birth. So it is compared to changing of dress. The analogy is used to show the absolute discontinuity, the catastrophic break that marks physical death. But the other body, the subtle body or *Sūkṣma-śarīra* in which the *Prāṇas* (vital forces), mind, intellect, and the ego are integrated, survives, carrying all the Karma-efficiencies created in one life to the next. It is because of the *Sūkṣma-śarīra* that re-embodiment becomes possible. So in respect of *Sūkṣma-śarīra* there is continuity from birth to birth. But when the enlightenment comes and the *Jīva* realises his real identity as the Ātman, the *Sūkṣma-śarīra* also perishes. This marks the real Death which is the door to Immortality. Death in this sense is also catastrophic in that it brings enlightenment, whereas in physical death it is catastrophic

at the physical level only; what follows is only another embodiment.

In these verses the Immortal Self and the Sūkṣma-śarīra continuing from body to body are indiscriminately alluded to, as they go together in the Jīva, the embodied being. Reference to this Immortal Self will be seen in verses such as 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25 etc., and the references to the continuing Sūkṣma-śarīra in verses such as 13 and 22.

In this context, the analysis of the human personality according to the Vedānta may be stated. The human personality has three bodies consisting of five sheaths or Kośas. These Kośas are: Annamaya-kośa or Gross body; Prāṇamaya-kośa or Vitalistic sheath; Manomaya-kośa or mental sheath; Vijñānamaya-kośa or intellectual sheath; and Ānandamaya-kośa, or the sheath of bliss. The Ātman, the spiritual Self, which is by nature Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, is clothed in these sheaths. It is the Ātman that endows the sheaths with the light of consciousness. Now these five sheaths are organised into two bodies — the Sthula-Śarīra, or the gross physical body, and the subtle body also known as the Linga-śarīra. All the sheaths except the Annamaya-kośa, ensouled by the Ātman, constitute the Sūkṣma-Sarīra, which parts from the gross body at death, carrying along with it all the tendencies and the merits and demerits acquired in life until it gets another embodiment in this earth-sphere or in any of the higher or lower spheres according to the Karma of the Jīva. The Jīva can enjoy the fruits of his Karma only with a gross body pertaining to this or any other sphere. In itself it is a carrier of the tendencies and merits and demerits acquired in previous embodiments. When enlightenment comes and the Ātman realises his spiritual nature as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, he is freed from the union with the Sūkṣma-śarīra, and the latter is dissolved into its elements. This is emancipation or Mukti.

3. V. 26-27: In these verses, the reference seems to be to some systems of philosophy like the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā which accepted an undying soul, the Ātman, but did not accept an ultimate Mukti or liberation for him. The Jīva acquires merits or demerits in this world, goes to heavenly or nether regions to enjoy their fruits and on the exhaustion of the merits or demerits comes again to the earth to acquire merits through Karma. He is never liberated. Enjoyment of heavenly felicities as a result of ritualistic and ethical actions done in life is the highest destiny of the Jīva. The continuity of the Jīva is accepted, as without it there will be nothing to conserve and enjoy the values generated by work. Arjuna is told that even if such a view of man different from that of the Vedantins is held, there is no cause for sorrow at death, as it will surely be followed by birth.

4. V. 28: This and the succeeding verse seem to refer to some school of naturalism, which accepts no immortal spirit. Death becomes a natural and no doubt a mysterious and unavoidable phenomenon.

5. V. 39. Sāṃkhya and Yoga are known in Indian philosophy as two allied systems having the same metaphysics but different methods of practice. Sāṃkhya is the intellectual analysis of the material categories, and the separating of Prakṛti from the Puruṣa, the spiritual monad. The system does not accept a God, a universal Being, who is the master of all spiritual monads and material categories. Salvation consists in the monad or Puruṣa getting isolation from the material categories with which it is integrated in the state of bondage. Intellectual analysis and reflection form the means for this. See Appendix for more information.

The Yoga has no metaphysics of its own but generally accepts the Sāṃkhya theory. But it concerns itself with various ways of inward concentration by which the ingathered mind can be made subtle enough to pierce the coverings of the spirit, and become aware of the spirit as distinct from its material vestments. Thus practically the Sāṃkhya, though having an identity of its own, is a metaphysics including the discipline of reflection or self-

analysis leading to realisation. Yoga is the systematic practice of concentration by which the realisation of that metaphysical truth is attained.

In the Gitā passage under discussion, though this Sāṁkhya and Yoga nomenclatures are used, the words practically mean what in modern Vedantic parlance we call Jñāna-Yoga and Bhakti-mixed-Karma Yoga. So the verse has to be understood as meaning: I have given you the understanding, the conviction, which enlightenment (Jñāna or Sāṁkhya) gives of the real nature of man — of his Essence, the Atman. Now I shall declare to you another way of attaining it, the Yoga or Karma-mixed Bhakti, which consists in performing all actions without attachments as devoted offering to the Divine, and in practising love of Him and getting one's mind absorbed in Him through concentration (Samādhi). The idea is to cultivate devotion to God and dedicate oneself and all one's actions to Him, as His servant and devotee. If one practises this discipline in life, the Supreme Being bestows the knowledge of the devotee's true relation with His being—the awareness of being part and parcel of the Sat-chidānanda. Sri Ramakrishna illustrates this by an analogy. A very faithful servant serves his Master for long and pleases him immensely by his love and loyalty. The master, out of intense love and consideration for him, puts him on his own seat, saying 'You are myself; sit on it.' Just like that, supreme knowledge of one's spiritual identity (or intimacy) is what comes out of the Lord's grace for a Jīva who serves and surrenders to Him through love and service.

This surrender in early stages consists in cultivating the feeling that one is the servant of God and that everything one does is on His behalf and what accrues from it is His. Thus the purely self-centred motivation in life is changed with the aid of devotion. In the maturity of spiritual understanding even the sense of agency is given up and one is established in the conviction that one is a mere instrument and He is the real agent too. When surrender is complete, the Supreme Being bestows that illumination which makes the Sāṁkhya or Jñāna doctrine of man's spirit-

ual identity as the Ātman, a real experience that one is the Spirit and not the body, and that death and all the infirmities of the body do not affect the Self. This experience may be interpreted as oneness with Him, or intimate kinship with Him.

5. V. 40: Spiritual practices may take a whole life-time or several lives to fructify as realisation. But an aspirant need not feel that the efforts he has put in this field are ever lost, unlike in agriculture and other such enterprises where one loses everything if failure occurs due to drought or other causes. In the spiritual field the competence that one has acquired remains as tendencies in the-subtle body, and in the next life one begins from where one left in the previous life.

There is another kind of defect in fruit-oriented action, especially of a ritualistic nature for the attainment of earthly or heavenly felicities. If they are done wrongly, one not only loses the fruits, but suffers adverse consequences, which are referred to in the text as *pratyavītya*. In the path of devotion, there is no such adverse effects for mistakes; for there are no mistakes or spiritual offences at all except want of faith. So *Srīmad Bhāgavata* speaks of this path of devotion as a well-paved high road along which one can even run blindfolded without any fear of fall.

6. V. 41: This gives the contrast between one who wholeheartedly follows the spiritual path and a worldly minded man who follows wealth, sensual satisfaction and ambition. A man who has a spiritual world-view, a firm faith in a Divine Intelligence based on the instruction of the scripture and the Gurū, has got a fixed goal that does not vary. He is like a man who has a correct idea of the destination and has selected the correct road to it. He is therefore at peace, knowing, that he is on the right road. A worldly-minded man, on the other hand, may not often have a fixed world-view. He cares only for gains, enjoyments, and pursuit of ambitions. So without any conviction about the nature of the universe and his own destiny in it, he pursues these diverse satisfactions, the objects of which change from time to

time. Hence the understanding of such a person gets many-branched, being engaged in the pursuit of several ends. His mental energies are thus dissipated, and he loses control of the mind and becomes a slave of the senses and their objects.

7. V. 42-44: The criticism offered here is intended to draw the distinction between the outlook of the new Gospel of Bhāgavata Dharma which Kṛṣṇa preached and the outlook of the Vedic fundamentalists who followed the philosophy of Vedic ritualism, which is known as the Purvamīmāṃsa system of thought. These ritualistic philosophers held that the purpose of the Veda is to induce man to perform rituals and fire sacrifices, which will gain him heavenly felicity. After death the Jīva will go to those heavenly regions where they will have the enjoyments of the fruits of the sacrifices they have performed. After the fruit-bearing effects of Karma are exhausted, the Jīva comes back to the earth to do more Karma enabling him to enjoy heavenly felicities again. Thus according to them, there is no salvation for the soul or getting out of Samsāra. The soul goes from embodiment to embodiment on earth and other spheres enjoying the fruits of his actions. Their outlook therefore multiplies man's desires and ambitions, and they justify this by quoting the Vedas as authority. In the nature of things, their mind becomes 'many branched' or divided by all kinds of passing desires. They have no conviction about the ultimate destiny of man beyond what has been stated. They are just like wanderers and vagabonds in the expansive field of life.

In contrast to them are the Sāṃkhyas and the Yogins. They have a spiritual world-view and a conviction regarding the ultimate destiny of man. They are free from desires. Their mind therefore gets unified following a single goal, unlike that of the ritualists whose mind becomes 'many-branched' because of their changing desires and objectives. That 'single goal' of the Sāṃkhyas and the Yogins is the realisation of one's spiritual nature as the Ātman and one's integral relation with the Supreme Being. The realisation of the truth puts an end to the transmigration of the Jīva and he becomes united with the Divine.

In this path of salvation also work as duty has a place. But all work, sacred or secular, has to be done as an offering to the Divine, and not for the attainment of heavenly felicities or any other type of enjoyments. The only result of it is purification of the mind and the dawn of the grace of God on the Jiva, by which he obtains illumination.

8. V. 45: In continuation of the thought of the previous verse the limitation of the philosophy of Vedic fundamentalists is again stated in the expression *traigunya viṣayāḥ* — connected with the three Guṇas of Prakṛti or Root-matter. Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas constitute Prakṛti or Root-matter. So the Veda as understood by the fundamentalists, deals only with matters material i.e. the life of the body, on earth and in heaven, as explained already. Arjuna is asked to accept the spiritual outlook *nīstrai-gunya*, which sees in matter or Prakṛti, only the shadow of the Spirit. The implication of accepting the primacy of the Spirit is given in the second line of the verse.

It must be understood that these and similar verses are not a condemnation of the Veda but a criticism of it as understood and interpreted by the fundamentalists. Really the Bhāgavata Dharma which Kṛṣṇa teaches is included in the Vedānta, or the Upaniṣads, which teach the nature of Jiva and Brahman and the way for realising the Brahman and attaining release from Samsāra, which is identical with the teachings of Kṛṣṇa. But the fundamentalists reject the Upaniṣads or interpret them as subsidiary to the ritualistic philosophy. So Kṛṣṇa's criticism is directed against that way of thought, and his Bhāgavata Dharma is the correct re-statement of the Upaniṣadic thought with an emphasis on the practice of devotion and dedicated work as the royal road to God's grace and salvation.

9. V. 46: This a continuation of the criticism of Vedic fundamentalism. The bliss of Brahman attained through Jñāna and Bhakti, for which the Upaniṣads and the Bhāgavata Dharma stand, includes in itself all other fulfilments like those that Vedic fundamentalism has in view, just as the lights of a few candles are

all included in the sun's light, or the waters of all the tanks in a place are merged in the water of a flood. Both candles and tank-water lose their significance in such situations.

10. V. 47-52: In these verses the ideal of Yoga as contrasted with the Sāṁkhya and the Vedic fundamentalism is stated. Sāṁkhya eschews work. Vedic fundamentalism advocates work for selfish purposes — the attainment of heavenly felicities. From here till the verse 52 is discussed the fundamental doctrine of the Bhāgavata Dharma, namely that of taking part in activities of life that form one's duty without desiring their fruits. This is unlike the attitude of Vedic fundamentalists and worldly minded people towards work. At the lowest level of the animal and the slave, work is the result of force or compulsion. At the higher level of a free man, it springs from profit motive — profit here or in other spheres in the hereafter.

When man grows out of his self-centred outlook, he gets a still higher motivation in occupations involving work for the community, country or humanity. But those who have a devotional outlook and want higher evolution, will find a satisfactory scheme of work only when work is dedicated to God, whether its immediate inducement is an individual or social concern. From the beginning to the end the Gītā teaches this scheme of devotion-oriented-work without desire for fruits. The fruits of work are offered to the Divine in the first instance and the sense of agency too at the maturity of spiritual life.

In reading this and the succeeding verses of the Gītā, it should be remembered that the even-sightedness or unperturbed state of mind is not to be had for the mere asking or wishing. It is the result of prolonged discipline and maturity of mind. It is an ideal state towards which we have to strive in our own imperfect way. Like an infant learning to walk, we may fail in our effort, but one has to persist in it in spite of such failure. Success will depend on the genuineness of our desirelessness, our discriminative endeavours, our earnestness to find a spiritual sanction for life, and our devotional fervour. As no hard and fast distinction can be made in

spiritual life between the ideal and the actual, the end and the means, the ideal of Karma Yoga itself is stated at the beginning. The ideal of Yoga or absolutely unperturbed condition of mind can be actualised only when one has the realisation that one is the Ātman. This state and the state described by the Sāṃkhya — of being established in the Ātman that is not affected by any material change or impact — are identical. Thus it is seen how the Yoga shades off into the Sāṃkhya. Hence though they can be analysed into two disciplines, they are basically one. Their relation of mutual dependence is discussed in the 3rd chapter.

11. V. 52: This is the state of Vairāgya, the capacity to view objects of sense without any self-centred motives — capacity to view such objects suited for food, sex-enjoyment, possession etc., as they are in themselves, and not as objects catering to our needs. Unless we have this capacity to some extent at least, we shall be entirely under the grip of instinctive drives — a state of mind which is described here as delusion. To the extent we are free from this delusion or infatuation, to that extent our mind is fit for spiritual perceptions.

12. V. 53: Just as we should be free from the hold of the senses, we should be free from intellectual doubts of a dilettante nature, which result from casual reading and lack of a positive and serious intellectual attitude towards spiritual problems and scriptural study. Thus a moral and intellectual earnestness is the prime requisite for attaining that state of spiritual realisation described as the state of the Sthitaprajña or the perfect sage of steady understanding, described from verse 54 onwards.

13. V. 59: Keeping aloof scrupulously from objects of enjoyment is no ultimate remedy for the thirst for sensuous enjoyments. These instinctive urges and subtle hankerings continue to be in our mind and draw us away when they get the upper hand at some time or other. Only spiritual realisation, the experience that one is the Spirit and not the body, can uproot them completely. The word *Āhāra* also means food, and the passage can be interpreted to mean that a man who fasts may be

able to abstain from objects as the body becomes weak, but he cannot conquer the hankering for sense objects by such physical means. Spiritual enlightenment alone can do this.

14. V. 63: In this and the previous verses the cause of man's all-round degradation is pointed out. Giving oneself up to the cravings of the senses, without any effort to regulate, control and sublimate them, is that cause. Such a life reduces him to the level of animality, which is the meaning of *Buddhināśa* or loss of discriminative intelligence.

15. V. 66: Contrary to the popular view, sense control, and not sense indulgence, is the way to happiness. For, true happiness can be had only on a basis of peace, which one can have only through meditation on God or the Ātman. But meditation is impossible without control of the senses. For, sense indulgence strengthens the outward-going tendencies of the mind and prevents the mind from getting in-gathered and concentrated on the Ātman, who is the source of all joy.

Chapter III

कर्मयोगः

COMMUNION THROUGH ACTION

SUMMARY

Conflict between work and Contemplation (1-2): Hearing the discourse on 'The Ideal of the man of steady wisdom', Arjuna's confusion only increases. If that state of inwardness and serenity depicted in the above ideal is the end for man to seek, how could its pursuit be reconciled with the life of action to which Kṛṣṇa has been simultaneously exhorting him, especially when that action is participation in a terrible holocaust like a fratricidal war? He therefore poses this question before Kṛṣṇa, and the rest of the chapter is Kṛṣṇa's answer to it.

The two paths : (3-8): Sri Kṛṣṇa said: Two ways of spiritual fulfilment have been revealed by Me — the Path of Knowledge (the Sāṃkhya) and the Path of Devotion-cum-Action (Yoga). They appear different, but as will be shown later, the difference is only apparent and they can be reconciled. But it is the Path of Action that now forms the subject of discourse.

By merely abstaining from actions, man does not gain that serenity of spirit, the unperturbed state of the *Sthitaprajña*. He will only be relapsing into idleness thereby. For one thing, it is impossible for any man to live for even a minute without any action; for, man is physically a part of Nature, and Nature is ever active. He is therefore compelled to act. So sitting quiet and thinking that one has attained to that unperturbed state of the spirit, will be rank hypocrisy. For, such a person's mind will be

very busy thinking of the objects to which he is attached. So the way of spiritual development for him lies not in abstinence from action but only in action performed without attachments and under proper regulation of the senses.

The law of yajña: (9-18): God created man with the law of Yajña as the means for his worldly prosperity and for his higher spiritual evolution. Yajña means self-sacrifice — the offering of what one considers precious, for the service of God and one's fellow beings. If our fellow beings can be looked upon as the very tabernacle of the Divine — for God indwells everything and everything is, in that sense, the body of God — this service itself becomes the highest form of worship too. Yajña, at the lower levels, is one of give and take. Man lives in a community which can thrive only by the exchange of commodities and services among its members. Each gets certain services from others and gives back certain other services in return. One who fails to do his part of the work but insists on his getting his share of the good things of social life, is an exploiter and a thief. He violates the law of Yajña and gets morally degraded. Rights and duties therefore go together, and to claim the former without due insistence on the latter, begets corruption and decadence and leads to ruin ultimately. The Vedic fire sacrifice, where thanks-giving offerings are made to the Devas for the benefits that they have bestowed on man through Nature, is symbolic of this great law of life. Both the ritual Yajña, and Yajña in a social sense consisting in the discharge of one's duties to the body politic, are based on action. And one who gives up action will be abandoning Yajña too and thus violating the basic commandment of the Creator — the ethical law of a life of non-exploitation.

Enlightened Ones too should work: (19-26): There may, however, be some rare individuals who have risen above all personal wants. They may be able to withdraw themselves from society, and live a life of self-contentment without depending on the services of others. Even they should work without attachment or desire for the fruits of work. For, by so doing, one progresses spiritually and attains the Supreme Being. Just as socially-oriented work makes man ethical, work done without any thought of selfish gain, as an act of pure service of God and man, raises him

to spiritual heights. Purely unselfish action without any thought of returns or obligations, is the higher aspect of the law of Yajña. So Janaka and other great Rājārṣis continued to be in the field of action and attained perfection through a life of disinterested action.

There is also another reason why all, including men of higher spiritual attainment, should work; for, otherwise they will be setting a bad example for unenlightened men, who, without a proper understanding of their mental state, would surely imitate their external behaviour, and relapse into abandonment of their duties, ending in pure idleness. A leader has always to be careful about the example he sets. Again look at Isvara Himself. He has no wants; but He is ever engaged in works for the sake of the Jīvas in Samsāra. So an enlightened man, though he might have risen above all considerations of self-interest, should work unattached and without any return in view, but at the same time evincing just the same zeal and energy with which a man desirous of selfish returns works. Otherwise he will be creating conflict of ideas and ideals among common people.

Wisdom is not to be confused with Inactivity: (27-35): The difference between the wise man and the ignorant man consists in this: the former is established in the experience that all actions that are supposed to be his, are only the movements of Prakṛti and that the 'real he', the Self, is only the uninvolved witness. The ignorant man, on the other hand, being absolutely involved in, and identified with, the movements of Prakṛti, feels that *he* is acting and enjoying. The way to attain detachment is not by keeping quiet without doing anything, but by discharging all one's duties, surrendering their fruits and the sense of agency to the Supreme Divine. Non-attached work (Karma Yoga) and discriminative understanding of one's basic nature as the 'unattached self' (Jñāna Yoga) are not contradictory but complementary. For, non-attachment in work is impossible unless one practises simultaneously the understanding that one is basically the 'unattached self.' And, except in the case of a few rare aspirants, the practice of such discriminative understanding about the Self, without the support of unselfish work, will end only in pure idleness and failure to do one's duty. One who fails to do his duty and runs after ways of life

that are alien to his inherent nature and aptitude, only incurs sin. For, to do what one ought to do, is virtue, and avoiding it out of idleness, or cupidity, or base passions, is sin.

What is Sin: (36-48) Arjuna thereupon asks the question why man commits sins, even though he may not want to. And Sri Kṛṣṇa answers: It is desire (lust) and anger that appear as sin and compel man to undesirable action. The seats of these passions are the senses, mind and intellect. So to avoid sin man must learn to control the senses first, but this cannot be achieved merely by suppression. One has to bring to bear the light of the Self, the Divine spark in one, on the intellect, mind and senses. Thus should one conquer man's great enemy sin, the combination of lust and anger.

अर्जुन उवाच—

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धि-जनादन् ।

तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ 1 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Jyāyasi cet karmaṇas te matā buddhir, janārdana

tat kim karmaṇi ghore mām niyojayasi, keśava ॥ 1 ॥

Janārdana : O Kṛṣṇa! *karmaṇaḥ* than action *buddhiḥ* : discriminative insight *jyāyasi* : superior *te* : by you *matā* : considered *cet* if, *tat kim* then why **Keśava :** O Keśava *ghore karmaṇi* : in this terrible action (like war) *mām* : me *niyojayasi* engage.

Arjuna said :

1. O Janārdana, if, according to Thee, discriminative insight is superior to action, why dost Thou enjoin on me this terrible action (of engagement in war)?¹

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।

तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ 2 ॥

Vyāmiśra'iva vākyaena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me
tad ekam vada niścitya yena śreyo'ham āpnuyām

॥ 2 ॥

Vyāmitreṇa : By conflicting *iva* : seemingly *vākyeṇa* : by words *me* : my *buddhim* : intellect *mohayasi* : you confuse. *Tena* : by what *aham* : I *śreyah* : the highest good *āpnuyām* : attain to *tāt* : that *ekam* alone *niscitya* : definitely *vada* : tell.

2. By seemingly conflicting words, Thou art confusing my understanding. Speak to me only about that which will definitely lead to my highest good.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

लोकेऽसिद्धिविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मया न च ।

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानं कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ ३ ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca :

Loke'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayā'nagha
iñāna-yogena sāmkhyanām krama-yogena yoginām ॥ ३ ॥

Anagha : O sinless one! *asmin loka* : in this world *sāmkhyanām* : for the sāmkhya (ascetic contemplatives) *jñānayogena* : by the path of knowledge *yoginām* : for Yogis (aspirants of an active nature) *karma-yogena* : by the path of action *dvividhā niṣṭhā* : twofold spiritual path *purā* : of yore *mayā* : by Me *proktā* : taught.

The Blessed Lord Said :

3. In times of yore a twofold spiritual path was taught by me, O sinless one — that of knowledge for Sāmkhya (who are pure contemplatives), and that of action for Yogis (who combine detached work with devotion).²

न कर्मणा-मनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ४ ॥

Na karmanām anārambhān naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo'snute
na ca saṁnyasanād eva siddhim samadhi-gacchati ॥ ४ ॥

Puruṣaḥ : Man *karmanām* : of actions *anārambhāt* : by non-performance *naiṣkarmyam* : state of egoless actionlessness (spiritual

passivity) *na āsmute* : reaches not. *Saṁnyasanād eva* : by mere external abandonment (by merely putting on the garb of renunciation) *siddhim* : spiritual perfection *na ca samadhiḡacchati* : does not attain.

4. By non-performance of action a man does not gain the state of spiritual passivity (or the state of egoless actionlessness called Naiṣkarmya). By mere external abandonment (Saṁnyāsa), he does not attain to perfection. ³

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ 5 ॥

Na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ ॥ 5 ॥

Jātu : Ever *kṣaṇam* : a moment *api* : even *akarmakṛt* : one without any action *na hi tiṣṭhati* : does not indeed remain *hi* for *prakṛtijaiḥ* born of Nature *guṇaiḥ* : by Guṇas (impulses) *avaśaḥ* : deprived of freedom *sarvaḥ* : all *karma* : action *kāryate* , are made to perform.

5. No man can ever remain even for a moment without performing any action. The impulses of nature deprive him of freedom in this respect and compel him to act.

कर्मन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः सं उच्यते ॥ 6 ॥

Karm'endriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āste manasā smaran
indriy'ārthān vimūḍhātmā mithy'ācāraḥ sa ucyate ॥ 6 ॥

Karmendriyāṇi : Organs of action *saṁyamya* : restraining *yaḥ* : who *manasā* : by mind *indriyārthān* : objects of senses *smaran* : thinking of *āste* : sits *vimūḍhātmā* : deluded person *saḥ* : he *mithyācāraḥ* : hypocrite *ucyate* : is called.

6. He who restrains the organs of action but continues to brood in his mind over the objects of sensual desire (enjoyed through them) — such a deluded person is called a hypocrite.

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।

कर्मैन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥ 7 ॥

*Yas tv indriyāṇi manasā niyamy'ārabhate'rjuna ।
karm, endriyāṇi karma yogam asaktah sa viśiṣyate* //7//

Yah tu : But who *indriyāṇi* : sense organs *manasā* : by the mind *niyamyā* : controlling *asaktah* : unattached *karmendriyāṇi* : by organs of action *Karma yogam* : communion through work *ārabhate* : begins, *Arjuna* : O Arjuna *saḥ* : such a man *viśiṣyate* : excels.

7. But he who, controlling all sense organs (by the power of his will) and becoming non-attached, lives a life of communion through dedicated action—such a person excels.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥ 8 ॥

*Niyataṁ kuru karma tvam karma jyāyo hy akarmaṇaḥ ।
śarīra-yatrā'pi ca te na prasiddhyed akarmaṇaḥ* //8//

Tvam : You *niyatam* : prescribed *karma* : actions *kuru* : perform; *hi* : for *akarmaṇaḥ* : to inaction *karma* : action *jyāyah* : superior, *Akarmaṇaḥ* : Of the inactive *te* : your *śarīrayātra api ca* : survival of the body even *na prasiddhyet* : would not be possible.

8. Perform your prescribed duties. For, action is superior to inaction. If you are totally inactive, even the survival of the body would become impossible.

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ 9 ॥

*Yajñārthāt karmaṇo'nyatra loko'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ ।
tad-artham karma Kaunteya mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara* //9//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī *ayam* : this *lokaḥ* : world *yajñārthāt* for the sake of Yajña (God) *karmaṇaḥ* : of action *anyatra* : in

respect of others *karmābandhanaḥ* : are bound by action. *Tadartham* : for the sake of God *muktasangāḥ* : without attachment *karma* : work *samācara* : perform.

9. O son of Kuntī! In this world all actions, unless they are done as an offering to God (or as Yajña), become causes of bondage. Therefore, work for the sake of God without personal attachments.

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।

अनेन प्रसविष्यद्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ 10 ॥

Saha yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā puro'vāca Prajāpatiḥ /
anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo'stv iṣṭa-kāmadhuk //10//

Purā : In the beginning *prajāpatiḥ* : the creator (Brahma) *sahaya-jñāḥ* : together with Yajña *prajāḥ* : beings *sṛṣṭvā* : having created *uvāca* : said, *anena* : by this *prasaviṣyadhvam* : shall you multiply *eṣaḥ* : this *vaḥ* : to you *iṣṭakāmadhuk* : a cow yielding all your wants *astu* : let be.

10. In the beginning Prajāpati, having created men together with Yajña (selfless work dedicated to God or Vedic sacrifice) as their duty, declared: "By this shall you multiply. May this be to you the Cow of Plenty yielding all your wants!"⁴

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ 11 ॥

Devān bhāvayat'ānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ /
parasparam bhāvatyantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha //11//

Anena : With this *devān* : the Devās *bhāvayantu* : cherish, *te* : those *devān* : Devas *vaḥ* : you *bhāvayantu* : may cherish. *Parasparam* : Mutually *bhāvayantaḥ* : cherishing *param* : highest *śreyaḥ* : good *avāpsyatha* : shall attain to.

11. "You cherish the Devas with Yajña, and may the Dévas in turn bless you (with rain and other desired gifts)!

Thus, mutually cherishing, you shall attain the highest good."

इष्टान्भोगान्नि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाषिताः ।

तैर्दत्तान्प्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ 12 ॥

Iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvītāḥ |
tair dattān apradāy' aibhyo yo bhuṅkte stena eva saḥ //12//

Yajñabhāvītāḥ : Cherished by Yajña *devāḥ* : the Devas *vaḥ* : to you
iṣṭān bhogān : desired enjoyments *dāsyante* : will bestow. *hi* :
Therefore *taiḥ* : by them *dattān* : gifts given *ebhyaḥ* : to them
apradāya : without giving *yaḥ* : who *bhuṅkte* : enjoys, *saḥ* : he
stena : thief *eva* : verily.

12. Worshipped by sacrifices, the Devas will give you the desired objects of enjoyment. They are verily thieves who enjoy their gifts without giving their share in return.

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ 13 ॥

Yajña-śiṣṭ' āsināḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ |
bhunjate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātma kāraṇāt //13//

Yajñaśiṣṭāsināḥ : Those who eat what is left after sacrifice *santāḥ* :
virtuous men *sarvakilbiṣaiḥ* : from all sins *mucyante* : are released.
Ye tu : Whoever *ātmakāraṇāt* : for one's sake only *pacanti* : cook
te : those *pāpāḥ* : degraded persons *agham* : sin *bhujate* : eat.

13. Those persons who eat what is left after sacrifice, are released from all sin. But those who cook food for the self alone (without sharing it with others), such degraded men eat sin.

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।

यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ 14 ॥

Annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaād anna-sambhavaḥ |
yajñād bhavati parjanya yajñaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ //14//

Annāt : From food *bhūtāni* : creatures *bhavanti* : are born, *parjanyaāt* : from rain *anna-sambhavaḥ* : the origin of food takes place *yajñāt* : from yajña *parjanyaḥ* : rain, *yajñah* : Yajña *karma-samudbhavaḥ* : is born of Karma.

14. From food (i.e., from reproductive power sustained by food) creatures are born. Food is produced by rain. Rain is born of sacrifice, and sacrifice originates from action.

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ 15 ॥

Karma brahm'odbhavam viddhi brahmā'kṣara-samudbhavam / tasmāt sarvagatam brahma nityam yajñe pratiṣṭhitam //15//

Karma : Acts of sacrifice *brahmodbhavam* : originate from Veda *brahma* : Veda *akṣara-samudbhavam* : arises from the Imperishable Being; *tasmāt* : thus *sarvagatam* : all-comprehending *brahma* : Veda *nityam* : eternally *yajñe* : in sacrifice *pratiṣṭhitam* : is established.

15. Works of sacrifice have their authority in the Veda. Veda has been revealed by the Supreme Being. Therefore the all-comprehending Veda is established in sacrifice (that is, has performance of sacrifice as its fundamental teaching).

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुर्निद्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ 16 ॥

Evam pravartitam cakram n'ānuvartayati'ha yaḥ / aghāyur indriy'ārāmo mogham Pārtha sa jīvati //16//

Pārtha : O son of Prthā! *evam* : thus *pravartitam* : set in motion *cakram* : wheel, cycle (i.e. the arrangement of mutual dependence and service) *yaḥ* : whoever *na anuvartayati* : does not follow *aghāyuh* : living in sin *indriyārāmaḥ* : delighting in the senses *saḥ* : that man *mogham jīvati* : lives in vain.

16. Vain is the life of that sinful and sense-indulgent person who fails to fulfil his obligations in this cycle of mutual

inter-dependence and service (which the law of sacrifice implies).

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ 17 ॥

Yas tv ātma-ratir eva syād ātma-tṛptaś ca mānavaḥ |
ātmany eva ca saṁtuṣṭas tasya kāryam na vidyate //17//

Tu : But yaḥ : whichever mānavaḥ : man ātmaratir eva : delights in the self alone ātmatṛptaś ca : and satisfied in the self ātmani eva : in the Ātman alone saṁtuṣṭaḥ : is content tasya : his kāryam : what ought to be done na vidyate : does not exist.

17. But whoever delights in the Self (Spirit) alone, and is content and satisfied in the Self, for such a person there is no obligatory duty to discharge.⁵

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ 18 ॥

N'aiva tasya kṛten'ārtho n'ākṛten'eha kaścana |
na c'āsyā sarva-bhūteṣu kaścīd artha-vyapāśrayaḥ //18//

Tasya : For him iha : here, in this world kṛtena : by actions done arthaḥ : object na eva : does not exist at all akṛtena : by what is not done kaścana na : there is nothing to come by. Āsya : For him sarvabhūteṣu : among all created beings kaścīd : any artha-vyapāśrayaḥ : dependence for any object na : is not.

18. He has no object to gain here in this world by action. Nor does he lose anything by abstaining from action. For him, there is no dependence on any created being for any object of his.

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।

असक्तो ह्यचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ 19 ॥

Tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ kāryam karma samācara |
asukto hy ācaran karma param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ //19//

Tasmāt : Therefore *asaktaḥ* : without attachment *satatam* : always *kāryam karma* : work that has to be done *samācara* : perform; *hi* : for *asaktaḥ* : without attachment *karma* : works *ācaran* : performing *pūruṣaḥ* : man *param* : the Supreme *āpnoti* attains to,

19. Therefore perform action always without attachment. For, by working without attachment a man attains the Supreme.⁶

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ 20 ॥

Karmaṇ'aiva hi saṁsiddhim āsthitā Janakādayaḥ /
loka-saṁgraham evāpi sampaśyan kartum arhasi //20//

Janakādayaḥ : Men like Janaka *Karmaṇā eva* : by work alone *saṁsiddhim* : perfection *āsthitāḥ* : attained *hi* : verily. *Loka-saṁgraham* : Good of society *sampaśyan* : having in view. *kartum* : to work *arhasi* : you should.

20. Men like Janaka verily attained to perfection by work alone. You ought to work for the good of the world (having their example in view).⁷

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ 21 ॥

Yad-yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat-tad ev'etaro janaḥ /
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate //21//

Śreṣṭhaḥ : A noble person *yat yat* : whatever *ācarati* : does *tat tat* : that *eva* : only *itaraḥ* : other *janaḥ* : men. *Yat* : What *saḥ* : he *pramāṇam* : standard *kurute* : sets, *lokaḥ* : the world, ordinary men *tat* : that *anuvartate* : follows.

21. Whatever the noblest persons do, the ordinary man imitates. The standard they set, the ordinary men follow.

न मे पार्यास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ 22 ॥

*Na me Pārthā'sti kartavyam triṣu lokeṣu kiṁcana /
nānavāptam avāptavyam varta eva ca karmaṇi* ||22||

Pārtha : O Son of *Prithā*! *me* : for me *kartavyam* : duty *na asti* : does not exist. *Triṣu lokeṣu* : In the three worlds *avāptavyam* : to be attained *nānavāptam* : impossible to attain *kiṁcana* : anything *na* : does not exist. *Ca* : Still *karmaṇi* : in action *varte* : am engaged *eva* : verily.

22. In all the three worlds there is nothing, O son of *Prthā*, that is binding on Me as duty. Neither is there anything that I have to gain, nor anything that I cannot gain. Still I am always engaged in work.

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ 23 ॥

*Yadi hy aham na varteyam jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ /
mama vartm'ānuvartante manuṣyāḥ Pārtha sarvaśaḥ* ||23||

Pārtha : O son of *Prthā*! *aham* : I *jātu* : always *atandritaḥ* : unwearied *karmaṇi* : in action *na varteyam* : did not continue *yadi* : if, *manuṣyāḥ* : men *sarvaśaḥ* : all around *manā* : my *vartmā* : way *anuvartante* : would follow.

23. O son of *Prthā*! If I did not ever continue in action unwearied, men all around would have followed My way.

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहान्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ 24 ॥

*Utsideyur ime lokā na kuryāṁ karma ced aham /
saṁkarasya ca kartā syām upahanyām imāḥ prajāḥ* ||24||

Aham : I *karma* : action *na kuryāṁ* : do not work *cet* : if, *ime* : these *lokāḥ* : worlds *utsideyur* : would perish; *saṁkarasya* : of confusion *kartā* : author *syām* : would be ; *imāḥ* : these *prajāḥ* : beings *upahanyām ca* : destroy also.

24. If I were not to work, all these worlds would have perished. I would have been the cause of confusion among men and of their ultimate destruction.

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।

कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ 25 ॥

*Saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāmsō yathā kurvanti Bhārata /
kuryād vidvāṁs tathā'saktaś cikīrṣur loka-saṁgraham* //25//

Bhārata : O scion of the Bharata race! *Karmaṇi* : to action *saktāḥ* : attached *avidvāmsaḥ* : ignorant people *yathā* : as *kurvanti* : act, *tathā* : in the same way *vidvān* : the enlightened man *asaktaḥ* : without attachment *lokasaṁgraham* : good of the world *cikīrṣuḥ* : desirous of *kuryāt* : should act.

25. O scion of the Bharata race! Just as ignorant men do action out of attachment, so let enlightened ones perform the same unattached, with the good of the world in view.⁸

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।

जोषयेत्सर्वकर्मणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ 26 ॥

*Na buddhi-bhedaṁ janayed ajñānāṁ karma-saṅginām /
joṣayet sarva-karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran* //26//

Vidvān : Enlightened man *karmasaṅginām* : attached to action *ajñānāṁ* : of the ignorant *na* : not *buddhibhedaṁ* : unsettlement of the mind *janayet* : should create; *yuktaḥ* : with equanimity *samācaran* : doing everything *sarvakarmāṇi* : all actions *joṣayet* : should make them interested in.

26. An enlightened man should not cause confusion in the minds of ignorant people (by his conduct). Himself working with equanimity, he should make them interested in all activities.

प्रकृतेः कियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।

अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ 27 ॥

Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |
ahamkāra-vimūḍh'ātmā kartā'ham iti manyate

||27||

Prakṛteḥ : Of *Prakṛti* *guṇaiḥ* : by Gunas (dispositions) *sarvaśaḥ* : everywhere *karmāṇi* : actions *kriyamāṇāni* : are performed. *Ahamkāra-vimūḍh'ātmā* : man deluded by egoism *aham* : I am *kartā* : the doer *iti* : thus *manyate* : thinks.

27. Everywhere the dispositions (powers) of Nature perform all works. But deluded by egoism, man thinks, 'I am the doer.'

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्ते इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ 28 ॥

Tattva-vit tu mahā-bāho guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ |
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate

||28||

Mahābāho : O mighty armed *guṇakarma-vibhāgayoḥ* : of the division of the dispositions of Nature and of actions springing from them *tattvavit tu* : knower of the real truth about them *guṇāḥ* : dispositions of Nature as organs *guṇeṣu* : in dispositions as objects *vartante* : remain, *iti* : thus *matvā* : knowing *na sajjate* : does not become attached.

28. But those who know the truth that the dispositions of Nature and the actions springing from them are distinct from the Self, do not get attached, understanding that it is not the Self, but the dispositions of Nature as organs that settle on the respective objects, which too are products of the same dispositions.

प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूहाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।

तानकृत्वविदो मन्वान्कृत्वविन्न विचालयेत् ॥ 29 ॥

Prakṛter guṇa-sammūḍhāḥ sajjante guṇa-karmasu |
tān akṛtsna-vido mandān kṛtsna-vin na vicālayet

||29||

Prakṛteḥ : Of *Prakṛiti* (Nature) *guṇasammūḍhāḥ* : deluded by the dispositions *guṇakarmasu* : in works prompted by these disposi-

tions *sajjante* : become attached; *akṛtsnavidaḥ* : who do not know the whole truth *mandān* : dull-witted *tān* : those *kṛtsnavid* : who know the whole truth *na vicālayet* : should not shake or unsettle.

29. Men, deluded by the dispositions of Nature, get attached to work prompted by these dispositions. Those who know the whole Truth should not unsettle these dull-witted men of imperfect understanding.

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याद्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ 30 ॥

Mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi samnyasy'ādhyātma-cetasā /
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ //30//

Sarvāṇi : All *karmāṇi* : actions *mayi* : in Me *samnyasya* : offering or surrendering *ādhyātma cetasa* : with mind in unison with the spirit *nirāśīḥ* : free from desire *nirmamaḥ* : devoid of egotism *vigatajvaraḥ* : with passion spent *bhūtvā* : becoming *yudhyasva* : fight.

30. Offering all your actions to Me, your mind in unison with the spirit and free from desires and egotism, you fight without the slightest touch of hatred or excitement.¹⁰

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।

श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ 31 ॥

Ye me matam idam nityam anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ /
śraddhāvanto'anasūyanto mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ //31//

Ye : Whichever *mānavāḥ* : men *śraddhāvantaḥ* : having faith *anasūyantaḥ* : free from disparagement *me* : My *idam* : this *matam* : teaching *nityam* : always *anutiṣṭhanti* : follow, *te* : they *api* : also *karmabhiḥ* : by (from) Karma *mucyante* : are released.

31. Whoever follow this teaching of mine, with their minds full of faith and free from disparagement, they also are released from the bondage of Karma.

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।

सर्वज्ञानविमूढास्तांस्त्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ 32 ॥

*Ye tv etad abhyasūyanto n'ānutiṣṭhanti me matam ।
sarva-jñāna vimūḍhāṁś tān viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ* //32//

Ye tu : But whoever *me* : My *etat* : this *matam* : teaching *abhyasūyantaḥ* : disparaging *na anutiṣṭhanti* : do not follow *acetasaḥ* : senseless *sarvajñāna-vimūḍhān* : blind to all wisdom *tān* : them *naṣṭān viddhi* : know as lost.

32. But those who disparage this doctrine of mine and discard it, know such senseless men, blind to all wisdom, as lost.

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्याति ॥ 33 ॥

*Sadrśam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter jñānavān-api ।
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati* //33//

Jñānavān api : Even a wise man *svasyāḥ* : of his own *prakṛteḥ* : nature *sadrśam* : in accordance with *ceṣṭate* : acts. *Bhūtāni* : Beings *prakṛtiṁ* : nature *yānti* : follow; *nigrahaḥ* : repression *kim* : what *kariṣyati* : will do.

33. Even a wise man acts in accordance with his nature. All beings follow their nature. What can repression do? 11

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ 34 ॥

*Indriyasy'endriyasy'ārthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau ।
tayor na vaśam āgacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau* //34//

Indriyasya : Of the senses *indriyasya arthe* : in the object of the senses *rāgadveṣau* : attachment and aversion *vyavasthitau* : are naturally established. *Tayor* : Of them *vaśam* : sway *na āgacchet* : let not come, *hi* : for *tau* : they *asya* : his *paripanthinau* : enemies.

34. It is natural for each organ to feel attraction or aversion in respect of objects pertaining to each sense. Do not come under their sway, for they are enemies (of all spiritual aspirants).

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ 35 ॥

*Śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt /
svadhar-me nidhanam śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhay'āvahaḥ* //35//

Svanuṣṭhitāt : Well performed *paradharmāt* : than the duty of another *viguṇaḥ* : imperfect, not glamorous *svadharmaḥ* : one's own duty *śreyān* : leading to the good. *Svadhar-me* : in one's own duty *nidhanam* : death *śreyaḥ* : leading to one's good. *Paradhar-maḥ* : Another's duty (duty alien to one's growth) *bhay'āvahaḥ* : conveying fear.

35. One's own Dharma (duty), even though not glamorous, is better than duty alien to one's growth (Para-dharmaḥ), however well performed. For even death in doing one's duty leads to one's good, while a duty alien to one's growth is burdened with the fear of downfall. 12

अर्जुन उवाच

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पुरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि बाष्ण्येयं बलादिषु नियोजितः ॥ 36 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

*Atha kena prayukto'yaṁ pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ /
anicchann api Vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ* //36//

Vārṣṇeya : O scion of the Vṛṣṇi race! *atha* : then *ayaṁ pūruṣaḥ* : man *anicchan api* : even unwillingly *kena* : by what *prayuktaḥ* : prompted *balād* : by force *niyojitaḥ* : compelled to *iva* : as if *pāpam* : sin *carati* : indulges in.

Arjuna said:

36. What is that, O scion of the Vṛṣṇi race, prompted by which a man is forced, as it were, to indulge in sin even against his will?

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ 37 ॥

Srī Bhagavān uvāca:

Kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ |

mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam ||37||

Eṣaḥ : This *rajoguṇa-samudbhavaḥ* : born of *Rajoguṇa* *kāmaḥ* : lust, *eṣaḥ* : this *krodhaḥ* : anger *mahāśanaḥ* : insatiable *mahāpāpmā* : cause of great sin. *Enam* : This *iha* : in this matter (i.e. in man's spiritual life) *vairiṇam* as enemy *viddhi* : know.

The Blessed Lord said:

37. It is lust, it is anger, born of *Rajoguṇa*, insatiable and prompting man to great sin. Know this to be the enemy (in man's spiritual life).

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ 38 ॥

Dhūmen'āvriyate vahnir yathā'darśo malena ca |

yath'olben'āvṛto garbhas tathā ten'edam āvṛtam ||38||

Vahniḥ : Fire *dhūmena* : by smoke *ādarśaḥ malena ca* : and mirror by dirt *tathā* : so *āvriyate* : is enveloped *garbhaḥ* : embryo *ulbena* : by the placenta *yathā* : as *āvṛtaḥ* : covered, *tathā* : thus *idam* : this (knowledge) *tena* : by that (lust) *āvṛtam* : covered.

38. As fire is enveloped by smoke, mirror by dirt, and the embryo by the placenta, so is knowledge overcast by lust.

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।

कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥ 39 ॥

Āvṛtaṁ jñānam etena jñānino nitya-vairiṇā |

kāma-rūpeṇa Kaunteya duṣpūreṇ'ānalena ca ||39||

Kaunteya : O son of Kunti *jñāninaḥ* : of the knowing one *nitya-vairiṇā* : by the eternal foe *duṣpūreṇa* : difficult to appease *kamarūpeṇa* : of the nature of lust *etena analena* : by this fire *jñānam* : knowledge *āvṛtam* : covered.

39. Knowledge, O Son of Kuntī, is covered up by this eternal foe of the aspirant after knowledge—the insatiable fire of lust.

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ 40 ॥

Indriyāṇi mano buddhir asy'adhiṣṭhānam ucyate /
etair vimohayaty eṣa jñānam āvṛtya dehinam //40//

Indriyāṇi : Senses *manaḥ* : mind *buddhiḥ* : intellect *asya* : of it *adhiṣṭhānam* : seat *ucyate* : is spoken of as. *Eṣaḥ* : This (lust) *etaiḥ* : by these (organs) *jñānam* : knowledge *āvṛtya* : veiling *dehinam* : embodied spirit *vimohayati* : deludes.

40. The senses, the mind and the Buddhi are said to be its seat. With these it veils knowledge and deludes the embodied spirit.

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥ 41 ॥

Tasmāt tvam indriyāṅy ādau niyamya bharatarṣabha /
pāpmānaṁ prajahi hy enaṁ jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam //41//

Bharatarṣabha : O scion of the Bharata race! *tasmāt* : therefore *tvam* : you *ādau* : at the very beginning *indriyāṇi* : the senses *niyamya* : controlling *jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam* : destroyer of knowledge and of special knowledge (realisation) *pāpmānam enaṁ* : this foul enemy *prajahi hi* : slay indeed.

41. Therefore, O scion of the Bharata race, controlling the senses at the beginning itself, slay this foul enemy, the destroyer of all knowledge and realisation.¹³

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ 42 ॥

Indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ param manaḥ /
manasās tu parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ //42//

Indriyāṇi : The senses *parāṇi* : great *āhur* : they say. *Indriyebhyaḥ* : Superior to the senses *manaḥ* : is the mind, *manasā tu* : than even the mind *parā* : superior *buddhiḥ* : is the intellect, *Yaḥ* : Who *tu* : even *buddheḥ* : than intellect *parataḥ* : superior *saḥ* : is He (the Ātman).

42. The senses are great, they say. Superior to the senses is the mind, and superior even to the mind is the intellect. What is superior even to the intellect is He, the Ātman.¹⁴

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ 43 ॥

Evam buddheḥ param buddhvā samstabhya' ātmānam-ātmanā /
jahi śatrum mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam //43//

Mahābāho : O mighty armed! *evam* : in this way *buddheḥ param* : what is superior to Buddhi *buddhvā* : having known *ātmanā* : by the higher self *ātmānam* : the lower self *samstabhya* : controlling, *kāmarūpaṁ* : in the form of lust *durāsadam* : difficult to conquer *śatrum* : enemy *jahi* : kill.

43. Thus knowing Him who is superior even to the Buddhi, and controlling the lower self with the higher, kill that tough enemy in the form of lust, O mighty-armed Arjuna!

ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धियो नमोऽस्तुते ॥
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णाष्टमोऽध्यायः कर्मयोगो
नाम तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥ 3 ॥

NOTES

1. V.2: Arjuna's doubt would probably arise in the mind of every reader of the Gītā after going through the second chapter. The Lord is trying to prompt Arjuna to action as against his desire to give up an active life and become a pacifist and an ascetic. But beyond mentioning Karma Yoga and offering some criticism of the Vedic ritualism he gives no exposition of that theme, but speaks all through about the philosophy of the Ātman, about control of the senses and the self-satisfied state of a man of steady wisdom (*Sthitaprajña*). All this looks irrelevant and confusing, if the object of the earlier discourse is to prompt Arjuna to action. Hence Arjuna's query.

2. V.3: It would appear that the Lord accepts the validity of the criticism of Arjuna and, though not in so many words, he seems to suggest that in His first discourse, which is only preliminary, He has put all the issues together and that a clarification is therefore called for. He gives that clarification now in unambiguous language. He has promulgated two paths—the Sāṃkhya or the way of the contemplative philosophers, and Yoga or the way of the activists (Karma Yogins) for whom action performed with the proper attitude is a part of their spiritual discipline.

Much confusing controversy will be found in the writings of Vedāntic Ācharyas in the interpretation of this passage because of the difference in their basic views on the relation between action and pure contemplation. Two views are held on this question. One is Yoga—that work and contemplation should be combined all through one's spiritual life. The other is Sāṃkhya maintaining that action with devotional contemplation is applicable only up to a certain stage, i.e. till the aspirant gains *Chitta-suddhi* or purity of mind, which in practical life means the capacity to check the outward going tendency of the mind. Karma Yoga has no relevance afterwards and one should take to the life of a pure contemplative philosopher at that stage. The main reason given for this idea is that works of every kind go to emphasise the reality of multiplicity and the ego, whereas the pure contemplative's discipline consists in the denial of these and so at one stage work has to be abandoned. There is a clear support for this interpretation in the Gītā passage: 'For one desiring to attain to the state of equipoise (Yoga), work

is the means. But for one who has attained equipoise (*Yogārūḍhaḥ*), quietude (*śama*) is the means" (6.3). Again: "But the man whose delight is in the Self alone, who is content with the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, for him there exists no work that needs be done as duty." (3.17).

The *Gītā* is equally clear in the passage under discussion that these two paths are distinct paths, and each independently takes one to a goal that is common to both. "The Status which is obtained by the *Sāṃkhyas* (contemplatives) is reached also by *Yogis* who combine action with contemplation. He who sees that *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* are one, he sees truly" (5.5.) It is also said towards the close of the *Gītā* in favour of *Yoga*: "Acts of sacrifice, gift, and austerity are not to be relinquished but should be performed. For, sacrifice, gift and austerity are purifiers for the wise. But even these works ought to be performed giving up attachment and desire for fruits. This, O *Pārtha*, is my decided and final view" (18.6). It is also said: "Though performing all kinds of action all through, the one who is resigned to Me attains to the eternal and undecaying state by My grace" (18.58).

Besides, the *Gītā* quotes the examples of royal sages like *Janaka*, *Asvapati* etc., who, even after being enlightened, continued to work with the attitude characteristic of the enlightened ones. *Arjuna*, too, is exhorted to follow their example (3.20). Those philosophers who hold to the doctrine of incompatibility of contemplativeness with activistic devotion after a stage, look upon these royal sages as exceptions to the rule and not as a proof of the compatibility of the two disciplines. They attribute it to their *Prarabdha* or operative *Karma*. The *Gītā* text, however, does not say they are exceptions. On the other hand, in Chap. 4. 1-3, the Lord asserts that this tradition of *Karma Yoga*, was known to *Rājarṣis* from ancient times, but it has since become extinct and that He is reviving it through *Arjuna*.

In the light of the general teaching of the *Gītā*, the followers of the two ways may be held as two distinct types—the one discarding the combination at a certain stage, and the other continuing the combination till the end. The former, called in the *Gītā* as the *Sāṃkhyas*, following the path of knowledge, abandon all actions at the very start itself if they are qualified for it, or at a certain

later stage, after being purified by Yoga discipline, when they take to a purely contemplative life. Through that discipline, they come to the recognition of all multiplicity as mere appearance and realise the unity of all existence in Brahman. The latter, called the Yogins, pursuing the path of combining devotion, contemplation and dedicated action, surrender the fruits of all their actions in the first stage of spiritual life and finally surrender their sense of agency also, to that Universal Will, *Īvara*, whose expression the world of multiplicity is. They also attain to the Divine. The former approach may be described as ontological in setting, and the latter, volitional. The end is the realisation of the unity of all existence as *Sat-cid-ānanda*.

3. V.4: *Naiṣkarmya* is not mere worklessness—external passivity or idleness. It is the state of establishment in the experience that one is the *Ātman*, the pure spirit, the uninvolved witness of passivity as well as of activity of the body-mind. Wilful worklessness which is tantamount to idleness is not the aim. 'True worklessness' has been compared to that of a man sitting in a train. The train may move or stop but the sitter in the train, being distinct from the train, is not affected by these states, but none the less moves with the train. When one's ego identifies itself with the body and feels 'I am the body', he becomes an actor, one involved in works. When he feels 'I am the *Ātman*', he remains as the spirit, the pure witness. That state is called *Naiṣkarmya*, or egoless passivity of the spirit. Spiritual perfection is never to be identified with self-willed passivity or idleness. So by mere external abandonment and adoption of the insignia of renunciation, perfection is not attained. Not only that, absolute passivity is an impossibility for any living being. That way even the process of living becomes impossible. One attempting it will turn a hypocrite. So what one is expected to do is to work controlling the senses by the mind and doing his duty in a dedicated way without caring for the fruits.

4. V.10: This and the succeeding verses up to V. 16 are put in the language of the Vedic sacrificial cult in which *Yajña*, the fire-sacrifice, is the central ritual. All old commentators comment on these in a literal sense, as Vedic ritualists conceived of a *Yajña*. Man can have a happy and prosperous life only if he lived in harmony with his environment, which consists of

Nature and the Divine agencies, the Devas, who control the forces of Nature. Man gets his progeny and his sustenance as the gifts of Nature and he has therefore got to be thankful to those Divine agencies whose expression these forces of Nature are. Man is required to make an offering of thanks-giving to the Devas, a share of the good things of Nature which he gets by their goodwill. This offering is made through fire which is the link between man and the Devas. So this thanks-giving takes the form of ritualistic fire sacrifices with offerings of commodities and utterance of Vedic hymns. Proper performance of these Yajnas by individuals and communities secures the goodwill of the Devas, and through that, worthy progeny and plentiful rain, on which man's survival and sustenance in this world depend. To partake of this gift of the Devas without being thankful to them and without making the offerings due to them is a form of theft, as the *Gītā* describes this, and a heinous sin. The relevancy of this in the *Gītā* context here is that such an essential duty imposed by the Veda on man in society as sacrifice will not be possible for one who abandons works and he will therefore be condemning himself to an unethical life, the life of a thief or exploiter.

While this simple ritualistic conception of Yajña is the plain meaning of these verses, it may be just a suggestion directed towards higher psychological and spiritual verities. Mahāviṣṇu, the Supreme Being, Himself is called Yajña and just as the Cosmos is His physical expression or body, the whole sacrificial set-up is considered a ritualistic form of His and the offerings to Devas and all adoration done are only the adoration of the One Supreme Being, whose parts all the Devas worshipped are. There is also the conception of the whole creative process as a sacrifice of Himself by the *Yajña-puruṣa*.

Besides, in Chapter 4 the *Gītā* itself speaks of Yajñas of several types, of which fire sacrifice described as *Dravya-yajña* or sacrifice of commodities, is only one. He describes Brahman-knowledge itself as Yajña and speaks of several forms of Yajña like sacrifice of commodities (*Dravya-yajña*), sacrifice of vital breath (*Prāṇāyāma-yajña*), sacrifice of austerity (*Tapo-yajña*), sacrifice of scriptural study (*Svādhyāya-yajña*), and sacrifice of knowledge (*Jñāna-yajña*). Thus fire-sacrifice, a ritual commonly known and practised, becomes

the symbol for all the moral and spiritual effort of man for his higher evolution.

Taking advantage of the symbolical value attached to the fire-ritual called Yajña in the Gītā, a modern student of the Gītā, who is a stranger to the fire-sacrifice as a ritual, can interpret these passages in terms of relevant factors of social life today. Production and distribution of consumable commodities is done through an exchange of services by capitalists, technocrats, labour, the distributor and the consumer. All these factors functioning with the good of the whole social order in view and contributing their respective services and receiving their due rewards without any party trying to take undue advantage of the others—may be called Yajña in the social sense. All this is based on work and a person who seeks all the benefits of society but keeps quiet and fails to contribute his share for social good can be described as an exploiter and a thief as the Gītā does. The difference in this interpretation is that, in place of the divine agencies, only the social environment is taken for mutual exchange of services and rewards. This explanation sublimates the ritualistic Yajña.

5. V.17: It is contended that a sage who remains fulfilled in his own higher Self and does not seek satisfaction from anything outside of him, and who has been described as a *sthitaprajña*, is free from the cycle of duties and obligations described earlier. He has no debt of any kind to pay to the Devas, as he has no interest even in the sustenance of the body. For he is fully satisfied with the Self in which he is absorbed. He has thus nothing to do (*Kāryam*) under moral compulsion. He is a free spirit. This is explained in the following verse.

6. V.19: The word 'therefore' here is very enigmatic, coming as it does after the description of a knowing one whose exclusive delight is in the Self, who is a free man without compulsion from any quarter to do anything. *Therefore* i.e. *for the above reason*, that he is free from the compulsion of duty, he should out of his free will work for the good of others, without any attachment for anything and without any sense of agency. This is the meaning of 'therefore' from the point of view of those who hold that a kind of Karma-Yoga which combines Bhakti, Karma, and Self-knowledge is the message of the Gītā.

Those who do not accept this combination of disciplines would interpret this 'therefore' as follows: "As you, Arjuna, is not endowed with the above-mentioned Self-Knowledge, but are at a lower stage of evolution, you have to follow the discipline of Karma in which alone there can be a combination of action and contemplation. After you have evolved into the state in which you are fit for pure contemplation, you can abandon all work, but not till then. Therefore you now perform Karma without attachment." It is obvious that this is an interpretative assumption unjustified by the context provided by the next verse.

7. V. 20—24 : The example of sages like Janaka appears to be given here to prove the self-sufficiency of Karma Yoga and in support of combination of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga—contemplation and non-attached action—till perfection is reached and thereafter. But those who oppose such combination describe these examples as exceptions. There is, however, nothing in the Gītā text to prove them to be so. They may be rare examples of perfection through Karma Yoga. But so too are perfect ones who follow pure Sāṃkhya. Both are rarities. The point to be noted here is that Kṛṣṇa considers Karma Yoga (which means action, devotion and contemplation combined) to be a self-sufficient discipline for attaining spiritual perfection. Welfare of the world (*lokasamgraha*), and not any self-centred objective, becomes the purpose of the action of such enlightened ones. Much more important than any individual example, the Gītā holds forth Śvara Himself as the most conspicuous example of such disinterested work. Man is exhorted to follow the Divine example. This is a conclusive argument in favour of Karma Yoga.

8. V. 25: The distinction between the work of the worldly-minded man and the enlightened Karma Yogi is clearly indicated. The former is self-centred, while the latter has overcome self-centredness and still works for the good of all. If Karma Yoga can take one to such a state of selflessness, that goal must be the same universal Self to which the Sāṃkhya attains by abandoning all desires and the ego. The ways of the two may be different but the ultimate goal is the same. It is the Self which embraces all selves.

The object of such work is the good of the world. Apart

from the good directly proceeding from such work, the example it sets is itself of immense good. If the best men in society practised quietism, lesser men may imitate their example and lapse into idleness. So they too should work but with a different motive.

9. V. 27-29 : The distinction between the ignorant man and the enlightened one, whether he has reached that state through Yoga or Sāṃkhya, is stated here. The enlightened man has no sense of agency and is therefore free from bondage. The ignorant man thinks he is the agent and he has therefore bondage arising from the good and bad fruits of his work.

10. V. 30: Till now Karma Yoga was described as work without attachment and without desire for the fruits of action. But a more complete description of Karma Yoga is given here, where it is taught that all actions should be resigned to the Lord. This resignation has two stages. First all the fruits of actions are resigned to the Lord. The Yogi has still the sense of agency—the feeling that he is doing the work. At a higher level of perfection, the sense of agency also is resigned. It has been already stated in 5.27 that a wise man understands that in work, the forces of Nature work on objects that are Nature's creations. The sense 'I am doing' on the part of the worker is superfluous, having no foundation. It is born of ignorance. But here it is pointed out that higher than Nature even, is the Nature's Lord, *īśvara*. Nature is only His executive force or His will and so His will is the only agency that performs all works. The individual will is only a distortion of the Divine will by man's egoism. When this distortion is overcome through devotion and resignation to the Divine will, complete peace and perfection is attained even in the midst of all work. Thus it is Bhakti that completes the Gita doctrine of dedicated and detached work. The Bhakti element is here stressed in the text for the first time. The doctrine of Bhakti is elaborated especially from the 7th chapter onwards.

11. V. 33-34: Verse 33 looks like a fatalist's dictum. But it is not so when it is read with the next verse 34. *Prakṛti* or Nature here means the manifestation in the present life of the mental tendencies, the character potential etc. formed by the virtuous and vicious actions done in past lives. It operates even on the knowing one. *Prarabdha* can include good and bad elements, but

since knowledge can arise only in a pure mind, evil tendencies in a knowing one will be very few and inconsequential. That all creatures are subject to their nature is a truism which none will dispute. But the dispute and doubt come when it is said: "What can *nigraha* (control or repression) do?" This question may be taken merely as raising an issue and not as a denial of the possibility of overcoming natural tendencies. *Nigraha* can be equated with the modern psychological concept of repression. It means, to forcefully suppress a desire or to try to eliminate it by forgetting in a fit of violent fear or shame. In either case the desire or the tendency is not eliminated, but only driven underground from where it will work havoc on the body and mind of man. So the question is asked: to what extent repression can succeed in overcoming nature? The answer is: 'Very little'.

The next verse gives the correct way of controlling nature. It is by cultivating awareness. It is given in 2. 66-68; how man gets infatuated with sense objects. He dwells on them longingly; that develops attachment; attachment develops into desire; desire generates animosities and infatuation; and infatuation makes him forget his moral and spiritual foundation. So if natural impulses are to be controlled it must be done at the outset, when they are just beginning to hold one's interest. This is possible only if one cultivates awareness of things and moods that entice one's mind, and then overcome them by discrimination and counter-suggestion at the start itself. So in verse 34 man is asked to remember always that there is a natural attraction between the senses and their objects and he is therefore exhorted to avoid exposure to their influence. If unavoidably exposed, one should exercise discrimination to protect oneself. The best way is to invoke the Divine aid through prayer and self-surrender. If this is not done at the very early stage and infatuation thus combated, then man becomes a helpless entity before the pull of the senses like an object that has been sucked into the vortex of a whirlpool. He could have avoided getting into it but having got in, it is difficult for him to escape.

Or the two verses may be understood as directly connected with Karma Yoga without drawing any of those psychological implications elaborated above. It may be thus stated: The

Prakṛti or the nature of man is to engage himself in all forms of activities with the body and the mind. To resist all this forcefully and to sit quiet like a stock or stone without doing anything as Arjuna wanted is an impossibility for any human being. Even a knowing one i.e. one who has realised his Ātmanhood and thus got detached from the body has to follow Nature's impulses in the matter of eating, sleeping, speaking, moving about etc., which are unavoidable for his physical and social survival. In Vedantic terminology even a knowing one is subject to his *Prārabdha* or Karmas that have led to the present embodiment until death destroys the body. That being the case, none, even a knowing one, can remain workless.

What is possible for an ordinary person is to practise discrimination, taking into account the fact that there is natural attraction for the senses to their objects and that these senses, if allowed to dominate, will cause the downfall of a spiritual aspirant. When a person is thus convinced of the danger posed by this attraction of sense objects, he will guard himself against the dominance of their influence. Non-attached work, and not forced withdrawal from all work, is the way of progress for man. For, to work is implicit in the nature of man and suppressing it by forcible means will only have adverse effects on him.

12. V. 35: The word Svadharma means, as understood by medieval Hindus, the duties sacred and social, that devolved on people according to their hereditary affiliations as Brahmana, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra. People's birth in these different groups was supposed to be determined by their Karmas of the past marking the stage of their evolution. Each class had its own social functions and means of livelihood as laid down in the Smṛtis. That formed the Svadharma or one's own duty for each individual of that class or Varna. He was to follow it and not that of others, *Paradharma*.

This way of determining Svadharma is possible only in a society where class has become crystallised into castes based on birth. Where classes lose all rigidity and tend towards classlessness, determining Svadharma by birth becomes impossible. Svadharma will have to be described as work in line with one's mental constitution and higher development. While as a psychological criterion it is

acceptable, it is not possible to determine it in actual life, and even if determined, one may not have the facility to pick and choose one's duty. In practical life one has to take it as the work that devolves on one as duty.

But here in this context Svadharma and Paradharma can be interpreted in quite a different way also, which perhaps is more appropriate too. Svadharma, for the vast majority of men, is a life of action. Arjuna is being exhorted to adopt Karma Yoga as his way of spiritual development, because a life of activity is the Dharma or way of life born of his own nature. Sāṅkhya or workless contemplation will be Paradharma, work alien to his nature, and therefore harmful to him. Paradharma may look attractive and one may, to a certain extent, succeed in pursuing it, but in the long run, one is sure to break down. The threat of this break-down will be always a cause of an obsessive fear within him. Workless contemplation will easily degenerate into sheer idleness in unworthy hands, and result in spiritual ruin. Svadharma or Karma Yoga may not be so glamorous, but it is safe, and will be found contributive to one's ultimate good.

13. V. 41: An aspirant is again reminded of the importance of controlling the senses, especially of tackling passions like lust, anger etc., at their very outset. If they are allowed to gather force, man will be at their mercy, and no control will be possible.

14. V. 42-43: In these two verses a psychological analysis of the human personality is given as an aid to the practice of the control of the senses spoken of earlier.

The senses, the mind, the intellect, and the Spirit (Ātman) are the four layers of human personality. The Spirit which is the ultimate foundation of man, is pure consciousness and the uninvolved witness of the modifications of these three layers. He alone is the conscious entity, and the three layers associated with Him are inert in themselves, but become living and conscious when His light of consciousness percolates through them, just as the dull shades of a lamp are illumined when the rays of the central light passes through them.

Now these appendages of the Ātman form the instruments of perception and the storage space for the memories of experiences.

So the impressions of the countless experiences of past lives are in them. The impressions of experiences they contain and convey are derived from repeated contacts with external objects for the enhancement of bodily life. These impressions have made the senses prone to look at these objects, only from the point of view of instinctive satisfactions. Thus when a man's eyes see a tasty food, he can think of it only as something fine to eat; when a person sees one of the opposite sex, he often thinks of the other as an object of sensual enjoyment; when he sees a tiger, he looks at it exclusively as a dangerous creature; when he sees a cow, he sees it as a creature useful for getting milk. This outlook generated by the senses colour the mind and intellect too. It is this tendency that is described in verse 41 as the foul enemy destroying man's discrimination and knowledge. They prevent a dispassionate view of the object, the view of the witness. On the other hand, they give a biased interpretation of them from the point of view of the instinctive satisfactions they can give. This has been referred to in a less pointed and indirect way in 2.62 and 2.64. The purification of the intellect and the mind can be achieved only when their attention is drawn inward towards the Spirit, who is behind the intellect even, instead of being driven to external objects by the force of natural tendencies, causing attachment and entanglement.

Communion with the Spirit purifies the intellect, mind and senses. It liberates the senses from the earlier dominance of nature over them, and puts them in a position to view all sense objects from an impersonal point of view and thus gain mastery over them. That is why the practice of devotion is absolutely essential for success in the discipline of Karma Yoga. For, non-attachment can never arise until the mind is able to hold the attitude of the witness and not of one seeking enjoyment. This new capacity can develop only when the bias given to the mind and senses by nature or past experiences is eliminated. This in turn can be achieved only when through devotion and meditation, the immaculate purity of the Spirit is brought to bear on the psychic being of man.

Chapter IV

ज्ञान-कर्म-संन्यास-योगः

RENUNCIATION OF ACTION IN KNOWLEDGE

SUMMARY

The Doctrine of Incarnation : (1-16) Sri Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna: I have revealed this spiritual knowledge in different ages for the benefit of man. Whenever unrighteousness prevails I embody Myself as the Incarnate for the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked. By contemplation on the deeds and teachings of these Incarnations man can attain salvation.

In whatever way men worship Me, I approach them in that very aspect. Those who have worldly desires, worship various deities who are aspects of the Divine. But true worship consists in reflecting on the Divine in oneself. I, the Supreme Divine, have created both the Orders of Nature and of Society (*Cāturvarṇya*) but I am not in the least affected by these actions, because I have no attachment to them. Those who contemplate on Me as the great Creator without any attachment, will themselves be freed from attachments and gain liberation.

The True Meaning of Actionlessness: (17-35) Non-action or *Naiṣkarmya*, which is the characteristic of the *Ātman*, does not mean inactivity. It means being established in pure awareness without involvement in any kind of change. Among embodied beings, he who has attained to that spirit-consciousness—by virtue of which he is ever established in this uninvolved *Ātman*-awareness and is free from any egoistic impulse even while his body and mind are carrying out all their characteristic movements,

he is the really wise man, not the one who, by an effort of his will, keeps aloof from external action, but inwardly remains subject to attachments and egoistic motivation. The former is an enlightened man while the latter is a mere idler.

This state of actionlessness in the sense of non-attachment is attained only through long and steadily practised discipline of dedicated action, combined with the discriminative understanding of one's being basically the 'non-attached Self.' Such knowledge-based action is the highest form of Yajña in the Vedic tradition. Yajña can take various forms. It may be with material ingredients, or it may take the form of austerity, or of practice of concentration, or of control of the senses, or of control of Prāṇa, or of scriptural study, or of practice of discrimination. The peak of Yajña discipline is reached when an aspirant sees the acts, the means of actions, the things acted upon and the process of action as but different manifestations of Brahman. This is called attainment of Samādhi in action. All action has Jñāna or wisdom as its end—the wisdom that enables one to experience everything as resting in Me who form their innermost soul. This knowledge has to be sought by serving wise teachers.

The Power of Enlightenment: (36-42) This Jñāna is the most powerful of purifiers, so that it is said that even the erstwhile sinner becomes a saint instantaneously on its onset. This wisdom comes naturally to one who becomes perfect in the discipline of disinterested action. One who has attained this is no more bound by any action, as even in the midst of all action he is established in the sense that he is the pure, detached and unaffected Ātman. Doubts and delusions about his spiritual identity no longer assail him. Service of the teacher, faith, and control of the senses are indispensable aids to the acquisition of this wisdom.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।

विवस्वामनवे प्राह मनुर्इष्याकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca:

Imaṁ Vivasvate yogaṁ proktavān ahaṁ avyayam /

Vivasvān Manave prāha Manur Ikṣvākave'bravīt

///

Avyayam : Eternal *imam* : this *yogam* : Yoga *aham* : I *Vivasvate* : to *Vivasvān proktavān* : taught, *Vivasvān* : *Vivasvān Manave* : to *Manu prāha* : told, *Manuḥ* : *Manu Ikṣvākave* : to *Ikṣvāku abravīt* : told.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. I imparted this immortal Yoga to *Vivasvān*, *Vivasvān* to *Manu*, and *Manu* to *Ikṣvāku*.

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।

स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥ 2 ॥

Evam paramparā-prāptam imam rāja'rṣayo viduḥ /
sa kālen'eha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ Paramtapa //

Paramtapa : O scorcher of enemies! *evam* : in this way *param-parāprāptam* : handed down in succession from teacher to disciple *imam* : this *rājarṣayaḥ* : the *Rājarṣis viduḥ* : knew. *Ṣaḥ* : That *yogaḥ* : Yoga *mahatā kālena* : by long lapse of time *īha* : here in the world *naṣṭaḥ* : was lost.

2. O scorcher of foes! This Yoga handed down from teacher to disciple in succession, was known to the *Rājarṣis* (royal sages). But owing to long lapse of time, it was lost to the world.

स एवायं मया तेऽयं योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ 3 ॥

Sa ev'āyam mayā te' dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purāṇanaḥ /
bhakto'si me sakḥā c'eti rahasyam hy etad uttamam //

(*Tvam* : You) *me* : My *bhaktaḥ* : devotee *sakḥā* : friend *ca* : and *aṣi* : are, *īti* : thus (thinking) *purāṇanaḥ* : ancient *saḥ eva* : even that *āyam* : this *yogaḥ* : Yoga *mayā* : by Me *adya* : now *te* : to you *proktaḥ* : has been told; *hi* : for *etat* : this *uttamam* : great *rahasyam* : secret.

3. You are My devotee and friend—thinking thus, I have today declared to you even that ancient Yoga. For, it is a

noble secret (imparted by a teacher only to a worthy disciple).

अर्जुन उवाच

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।

कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥ 4 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Aparam bhavato janma param janma Vivasvataḥ ।

katham etad vijānīyām tvam ādau proktavān iti //4//

Bhavataḥ : Of Thee *janmaḥ* : birth *aparam* : is not distant, is later, *Vivasvataḥ* : of *Vivasvān param* : very distant, earlier. *Tvam* : Thou *ādau* : in the beginning *etat* : this *proktavān* : have taught *iti* : this *katham* : how *vijānīyām* : am I to understand.

Arjuna said:

4. Thy life-time is later, that of Vivasvān was much earlier. How then am I to understand that Thou didst impart this doctrine to him?

श्रीभगवानुवाच

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥ 5 ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca:

Bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava c'ārjuna ।

tāny ahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvam vettha paramtapa //5//

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *me* : for Me *tava* : for you *ca* : and *bahūni* : many *janmāni* : births *vyatītāni* : have passed through. *Tāni sarvāṇi* : All that *ahaṁ* : I *veda* : know, *tvam* : you *na vettha* : do not know *Paramtapa* : O scorcher of foes!

The Blessed Lord said:

5. O Arjuna! You and I have passed through many births; I remember them all, but you do not, O scorcher of foes!'

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ 6 ॥

Ajo'pi sann avyay'ātmā bhūtānām īśvaro'pi san /
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā //6//

Ajaḥ : Birthless *avyayātmā* : deathless *api san* : though being
bhūtānām : of beings *īśvaraḥ* : Lord *api san* : though being *svām* :
My own *prakṛtiṁ* : Nature *adhiṣṭhāya* : governing, employing
ātmamāyayā : by the mysterious power inherent in Me *sambhavāmi* :
am born.

6. Though birthless and deathless, and the Lord of all beings as well, yet I (the Eternal Being) take birth by My inherent mysterious Power (*Ātma-māyayā*), employing the pure or Sattva aspect of My material Nature (*Prakṛti*).

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ 7 ॥

Yadā-yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati Bhārata /
abhyutthānam adharmaḥsya tadā'tmānam sṛjāmy aham //7//

Bhārata : O scion of the Bharata race! *Yadā yadā* : whenever
dharmasya : of Dharma (righteousness) *glāniḥ* : decline *adhar-*
masya : of Adharma (unrighteousness) *abhyutthānam* : ascendance
bhavati : takes place, *tadā* : then *aham* : I *ātmānam* : Myself
sṛjāmi : send forth, manifest.

7. Whenever there is decline of Dharma and ascendance of Adharma, then, O scion of the Bharata race! I manifest (incarnate) Myself in a body.

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ 8 ॥

Paritrāṇāya sādhunām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-samsthāpan'ārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge //8//

Sādhūnām : Of the good *paritrāṇāya* : for the protection, *duṣkṛtām* : of the evil *vināśāya* : for the destruction *ca* : and, *dharmasamsthāpanārthāya* : for the establishment of Dharma *yuge yuge* from age to age *sambhavāmi* : I am born.

8. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil, and for the establishment of Dharma, I am born from age to age.²

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ 9 ॥

Janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvataḥ /
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar-janma n'aiti mām eti so'rjuna //9//

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *me* : My *evam* : in this way *divyam* : divine *janma* : birth *karma* : actions *ca* : and *yaḥ* : who *tattvataḥ* : in their nature *veti* : understands, *saḥ* : he *deham* : body *tyaktvā* : abandoning *punaḥ* : again *janma* : birth *na* : not *eti* : gets, *mām* : Me *eti* : gets.

9. O Arjuna! He who thus understands the truth about My embodiment and My deeds—he, on abandoning his present body, is not reborn, he attains to Me.³

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।

बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥ 10 ॥

Vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhā manmayā mām upāśritāḥ /
bahavo jñāna-tapasā pūtā mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ //10//

Vitarāgabhyakrodhāḥ : free from passion, fear and anger, *manmayāḥ* : ever absorbed in my thoughts, *mām upāśritāḥ* : dependent on Me *bahavaḥ* : many *jñānatapasā* : by knowledge and austerity *pūtāḥ* : purified *madbhāvam* : My state *āgatāḥ* : have attained to.

10. Freed from passion, fear and anger, ever absorbed in My thought, and ever dependent on Me—many have attained

to My state, being purified by the fire of knowledge and austerity.

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव मज्जाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ 11 ॥

Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tath'aiva bhajāmy aham /
mama vartm'ānuvartante manuṣyāḥ Pārtha sarvaśaḥ //11//

Pārtha : O son of Prthā! *ye* : whosoever *yathā* : through whatever path *mām* : Me *prapadyante* : worship, *tān* : them *tathā* : in the same way *eva* : verily *aham* : I *bhajāmi* : accept. *Manuṣyāḥ* : men *sarvaśaḥ* : everywhere *mama* : My *vartma* : path *ānuvartante* : follow.

11. O Pārtha! Whosoever worship Me through whatsoever path, I verily accept and bless them in that way. Men everywhere follow My path.⁴

कङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।

क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ 12 ॥

Kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhim yajanta iha devatāḥ /
kṣipram hi mānuṣe loke siddhir bhavati karma-jā //12//

Iha : In this world *karmaṇām* : of Karmas *siddhim* : results, fruits *kāṅkṣantaḥ* : those desiring *devatāḥ* : deities *yajante* : worship; *hi* : for *mānuṣe* : in the human *loke* : world *karmajā* : born of Karma *siddhiḥ* : fruit *kṣipram* : quickly *bhavati* : is attained.

12. In this world those who entertain desire for the fruits of pious works, worship the deities. For in this world of men such actions bear fruit quickly.⁵

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्वन्कर्तारमव्ययम् ॥ 13 ॥

Cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa -karma-vibhāgaśaḥ /
tasya kartāram api mām viddhy akartāram avyayam //13//

Guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ : According to division of aptitudes born of Nature's dispositions (*Guṇās*) and works *cāturvarṇyam* : the division into fourfold *Varṇās mayā* : by Me *śṛṣṭam* : created. *Tasya* : Of it *kartāram* : originator *apī* : though *mām* : Me *akartāram* : non-doer *avyayam* : unchanging *viddhi* : know as.

13. According to the aptitudes resulting from the dispositions of Nature (*Guṇas*) and works, the social order of fourfold division has been created by Me. Though I am their originator, know me to be not an agent but the spirit unchanging.⁶

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥ 14 ॥

Na mām karmāṇi limpanti na me karma-phale sprhā /
iti mām yo'bhijānāti karmabhir na sa badhyate //14//

Karmāṇi : Actions *mām* : Me *na* : not *limpanti* : affect, *na* : not *karmaphale* : in the fruits of action *sprhā* : desire; *iti* : thus *mām* : Me *yaḥ* : whoever *abhijānāti* : knows, *saḥ* : he *karmabhiḥ* : by *Karmas na* : not *badhyate* : is bound.

14. Actions do not affect Me. Nor have I any desire for the fruits of action. Whoever knows Me to be so, is not bound by Karma.

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥ 15 ॥

Evam jñātvā kṛtam karma purvair api mumukṣubhiḥ /
kuru karm'eva tasmāt tvam pūrvaiḥ pūrvataram kṛtam //15//

Evam : Thus *jñātvā* : knowing *pūrvaiḥ* : ancient *mumukṣubhiḥ* : seekers after liberation *karma* : action *kṛtam* : was performed. *Tasmāt* : Therefore *pūrvaiḥ* : by the ancients *pūrvataram* : from time immemorial *kṛtam* : performed *karma eva* : Karma itself *tvam* : you *apī* : also *kuru* : perform.

15. Knowing thus, the ancient aspirants after liberation per-

formed works. Therefore you too do work as these ancients did from time immemorial.

किं कर्म किमकर्मैति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।

तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ 16 ॥

Kim karma kim akarm'eti kavayo'py atra mohitāḥ /

tat te karma pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvā mokṣyase'subhāt //16//

Karma kim : What is work, *akarma kim* : what is 'no-work', *iti* : thus *atra* : in this matter *kavayaḥ api* : even wise men *mohitāḥ* : are perplexed; *yaj* : which *jñātvā* : knowing *aśubhāt* : from evil *mokṣyase* : you will be liberated, *tat* : that *karma* : action *pravakṣyāmi* : I shall tell.

16. What is work and what is 'no work', is a subject regarding which even the wise are perplexed. I shall therefore speak to you about work, by knowing which one is liberated from evil (or the life of bondage in Samsāra).⁷

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ 17 ॥

Karmaṇo hy api boddhavyaṁ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ /

akarmaṇaś ca boddhavyaṁ gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ //17//

Karmaṇaḥ : (The truth) about beneficial Karma *api* : even *boddhavyaṁ* : has to be understood, *vikarmaṇaḥ ca* : also (the truth) about baneful work *boddhavyaṁ* : has to be understood, *akarmaṇaḥ ca* : (the truth) about 'no work' also *boddhavyaṁ* : has to be understood, *karmaṇaḥ* : of Karma *gatiḥ* : the way *gahanā* : difficult to understand.

17. The truth about the nature of 'beneficial work' has to be understood, as also of 'baneful work' and of 'no work'. The way of work is difficult indeed to understand.

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ 18 ॥

*Karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyed akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ /
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt* //18//

Karmaṇi : In work *akarma* : 'no work' *akarmaṇi karma* : in 'no work' work *ca* : and *yaḥ* : who *paśyet* : would see, *saḥ* : he *manuṣyeṣu* : among men *buddhimān* : intelligent; *saḥ* : he *kṛtsnakarma kṛt* : accomplisher of all work *yuktaḥ* : established in Yoga.

18. He who sees work in 'no work' and 'no work' in work, he is wise among men. Even while doing all work, he remains established in Yoga.⁸

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।

ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ 19 ॥

*Yasya sarve samāraṁbhāḥ kāma-saṁkalpa-varjitāḥ /
jñān'āgni-dagdha-karmāṇaṁ tam āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ* //19//

Yasya : Whose *sarve* : all *samāraṁbhāḥ* : actions *kāmasaṁkalpa-varjitāḥ* : devoid of desire-born objectives, *jñānāgnidagdha-karmāṇaṁ* : whose actions have been burnt up by the fire of knowledge. *tam* : him *budhāḥ* : the wise *paṇḍitaṁ* : sage *āhuḥ* : call.

19. Whose undertakings are devoid of self-centred objectives, whose works have been burnt up by the fire of knowledge—him the wise call a sage.

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥ 20 ॥

*Tyaktvā karma-phalāsaṅgam nitya-tṛpto nirāśrayaḥ /
karmaṇy abhipravṛtto'pi nai'va kiñcit karoti saḥ* //20//

Karmaphalāsaṅgam : Attachment for the fruits of action *tyaktvā* : having abandoned, *nityatṛptaḥ* : ever satisfied *nirāśrayaḥ* : free

from calculations *karmanī* : in action *abhipravṛttaḥ* : engaged
api : even *saḥ* : he *kīñcit* : anything *na karoti eva* : does not do verily.

20. Without attachment to the fruits of action, ever-satisfied and free from calculations, he is verily doing nothing, even though engaged in actions.

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

शरीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ 21 ॥

Nirāśīr yata-citt'ātmā tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ /

śārīram kevalam karma kurvan n'āpnōti kilbiṣam

||21||

Nirāśīḥ : Without desires *yatacittātmā* : with mind controlled
tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ : with no sense of ownership over possessions
śārīram : physical *kevalam* : mere *karma* : actions *kurvan* :
performing *kilbiṣam* : sin *na āpnōti* : incurs not.

21. One who is free from desires, whose mind is well-controlled, and who is without any sense of ownership, incurs no sin from works, as his actions are merely physical.

यदृच्छालाभसंयुष्टो द्वन्द्वतीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धासिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ 22 ॥

Yadṛcchālābhasaṁyukṣṭo dvandv'atīto vimatsaraḥ /

samaḥ siddhāv asiddhau ca kṛtvā'pi na nibadhyate

||22||

Yadṛcchālābhasaṁyukṣṭaḥ : Satisfied with whatever comes without calculation, *dvandvātītaḥ* : rising above the contrasting conditions of life; *vimatsaraḥ* : free from competitive spirit, *siddhau* : in success *asiddhau* : in failure *ca* : and *samaḥ* : alike, *kṛtvā'pi* : though acting *na nibadhyate* : is not bound.

22. Satisfied with whatever comes without calculations, rising above the contrasting conditions of life, without any competitive spirit, and alike in success and in failure, a man, though working, incurs no sin.

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।

यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ 23 ॥

Gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñān'āvasthita-cetasah /

yajñāy'ācarataḥ karma samagraṁ praviliyate

//23//

Gata-saṅgasya : Of one without attachment *muktasya* : of one who is free (from the sense of agency) *jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ* : of one whose mind is well established in the knowledge of God *Yajñāya* : by way of dedication to the Lord *karma* : work *ācarataḥ* : performing *samagram* : in entirety i.e. along with the tendencies responsible for it *praviliyate* : melt away.

23. In the case of one who is without attachments and the sense of agency, and whose mind is fully established in the knowledge of God,—his actions, being done in dedication to the Lord, melt away with their very tendencies.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ 24 ॥

Brahm'ārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahm'āgnau brahmaṇā hutam /

brahm'āiva tena gantavyaṁ brahma-karma-samādhinā *//24//*

Arpaṇam : Offering *Brahma* : is Brahman, *haviḥ* : oblations *Brahman* : is Brahman; *Brahmāgnau* : in the fire that is Brahman *Brahmaṇā* : by the sacrificer who is Brahman *hutam* : sacrificial rite performed (*Brahma* : is Brahman); *Brahmakarmasamādhinā* : by one who has this absorption in work as Brahman *tena* : by him *gantavyam* : should be reached *Brahma eva* : Brahman alone.

24. To one of the above description, the ladle with which the offering is made and the oblations are Brahman; and the sacrificial rite (which is Brahman) is performed by the sacrificer who is Brahman, in the fire which too is Brahman. He who is thus absorbed in work as Brahman, attains to Brahman alone.⁹

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पयुंपासते ।

ब्रह्मन्नाद्यपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुहति ॥ 25 ॥

*Daivam ev'āpare yajñam yoginaḥ paryupāsate /
brahm'āgnau apare yajñam yajñen' aiv'opajuhvati* //25//

Apāre : Other *yoginaḥ* : Yogins *daivam eva* : relating to Devas alone *Yajñam* : sacrifice *paryupāsate* : perform. *Apāre* : Still others *yajñena eva* : by sacrifice itself (by Ātman) *yajñam* : sacrifice (oblation) *brahmāgnau* : in the fire of Brahman *upajuhvati* : make oblations.

25. Some Yogis perform sacrifices especially wanting to propitiate deities. Still others offer sacrifice (the Ātman) itself as oblation (Yajña) in the fire of Brahman.¹⁰

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुहति ।

शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुहति ॥ 26 ॥

*Śrotrādīnī'ndriyāṇy anye samyam'āgniṣu juhvati /
śabdādīn viṣayān anya indriy'āgniṣu juhvati* //26//

Anye : Other Yogins *śrotrādīni* : hearing and other *indriyāṇi* : organs of knowledge *samyam'āgniṣu* : in the fire of restraint *juhvati* : offer as sacrifice. *Anye* : Some *śabdādīn* : sound and other *viṣayān* : sense objects *indriyāgniṣu* : in the fire of senses *juhvati* : offer as sacrifice.

26. Some offer their organs of knowledge like hearing as sacrifice in the fire of restraint, while others take in all their sense perceptions as oblations made in the fire of their respective senses.

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।

आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुहति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥ 27 ॥

*Sarvāṇī'ndriya-karmāṇi prāṇakarmāṇi cā'pare /
ātma-samyama yoga'agnau juhvati jñāna-dīpite* //27//

Apare : Others *sarvāṇi* : all *indriyakarmāṇi* : functions of the sense organs *prāṇakarmāṇi ca* : and the functionings of Prāṇa (vital energy) *jñānadīpiti* : enkindled by knowledge *ātmasamyama-yogāgnau* : in the fire of the discipline of self-restraint *juhvati* : offer as sacrifice.

27. Others offer all the functions of their senses and vital energy as sacrificial offerings in the fire of self-restraint kindled by knowledge.

द्रव्ययज्ञस्तपोयज्ञ योगयज्ञस्तथापरे ।

स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ 28 ॥

Dravya-yajñās tapo-yajñā yoga-yajñās tathā'pare /
svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñāś ca yatayaḥ samśita-vratāḥ //28//

Tathā : Likewise *apare* : some *saṁśitavratāḥ yatayaḥ* : being of rigid vows and hard practice *dravyayajñāḥ* : offerers of their wealth as sacrifice, *tapoyajñāḥ* : offerers of austerity as sacrifice, *yogayajñāḥ* : offerers of their Yogic practice as sacrifice, *svādhyāya-jñānayajñāḥ ca* : and offerers of daily study of the Vedas as knowledge sacrifice.

28. Likewise others, being of rigid vows and hard practice, offer their wealth, their austerities, their Yogic practices, and their daily study of the Vedas as sacrifice.

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।

प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥ 29 ॥

Apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe'pānam tathā'pare /
prāṇ'āpāna-gatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ //29//

Prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ : Devoted to the practice of Prāṇāyāma *apare* : some others *prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā* : regulating the movement of Prāṇa and Apāna, *apāne* : in Apāna *prāṇam* : Prāṇa, *tathā* : in the same way *prāṇe* : in Prāṇa *apānam* : Apāna *juhvati* : offer oblations.

29. Others devoted to the practice of Prāṇāyāma, regulate the movement of Prāṇa and Apāna, and offer as oblation Prāṇa in Apāna, and likewise Apāna in Prāṇa.

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।

सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥ 30 ॥

Apare niyat'āhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati |
sarve'py ete yajña-vido yajña-kṣapita-kalmaṣāḥ

||30||

Apare : Some others *niyatāhārāḥ* : regulating their food *prāṇān* : Prāṇas (vital energy acquired from food) *prāṇeṣu* : in Prāṇas (vital energy in the body) *juhvati* : offer as a sacrificial offering; *ete sarve api* : all these *yajñavidāḥ* : knowers of Yajña, *yajñakṣapitakalmaṣāḥ* : men having their impurities washed away by Yajña.

30. Some others, who observe regulation of food, make a sacrificial offering of the Prāṇa as the vital energy present in food stuffs, into the Prāṇa as the vital energy enlivening the body. All these know the true nature of sacrifice and have all evil in them washed away by Yajña (sacrifice).

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।

नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥ 31 ॥

Yajña-ṣiṣṭāmṛta-bhujo yānti brahma sanātanam |
n'āyam loko'sty ayajñasya kuto'nyaḥ Kuru-sattama

||31||

Yajña-ṣiṣṭāmṛta-bhujaḥ : Those who partake of nectar, the sacred remnants of a sacrifice *sanātanam* : eternal *brahma* : Brahman *yānti* : attain to *Kurusattma* : O Thou the best among the Kurus! *ayajñasya* : for one who does not follow the discipline of Yajña *ayam* : this *lokaḥ* : world *na asti* : is not, *anyaḥ* : the other *kutaḥ* : where?

31. Those who partake of nectar, the sacramental remnants of sacrifice, attain to the eternal Brahman. O Thou the best of the Kurus! For one who sacrifices not, this world is lost, not to speak then of the hereafter.¹¹

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।

कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानिवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ 32 ॥

*Evam bahuvīdhā yajñā vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe /
karmajān viddhi tān sarvān evaṁ jñātvā vimokṣyase* //32//

Evam : In this way *bahuvīdhāḥ* : many kinds of *yajñāḥ* : sacrifices *brahmaṇ mukhe* : in the face of Brahman i.e. in the Vedas as their prominent teaching. *vitatāḥ* : are set forth. *Sarvān tān* : All of them *karmajān viddhi* : know as springing from work. *Evam* : Thus *jñātvā* : knowing *vimokṣyase* : you will be free.

32. Thus many forms of sacrifice are set forth prominently in the Vedas (as paths to Brahman). All of them spring from work (done by body, mind, and speech). Knowing this, you will attain liberation.

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ 33 ॥

*Śreyān dravyamayād yajñāt jñāna-yajñāḥ Paraṁtapa /
sarvaṁ karmā'khilam Pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate* //33//

Paraṁtapa : O Scorcher of enemies *dravyamayāt* : than material *yajñāt* : sacrifice *Jñānayajñāḥ* : knowledge sacrifice *śreyān* : is superior. *Pārtha* : O son of Pṛthā. *sarvaṁ* : all *karma* : work *akhilam* : without exception *jñāne* : in knowledge *parisamāpyate* : culminates.

33. O scorcher of enemies! Sacrifice involving knowledge is superior to sacrifice with material objects; for, O son of Pṛthā, all works without exception culminate in knowledge.¹²

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ 34 ॥

*Tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā /
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ* //34//

Pranipātena : With prostrations *paripraśnena* : with repeated questionings *sevayā* : with service *tat* : that *viddhi* : learn. *Tattvadarśinaḥ* : The knowers of the Truth *jñāninaḥ* : wise men *jñānam* : knowledge of the Truth *te* : to you *upadekṣyanti* : will teach.

34. With reverential salutations do you approach them—the wise men who have known the Truth. Serve them, and question them repeatedly (with due respect until your doubts are clarified). These wise men will impart the knowledge of this divine Truth unto you.

यज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।

येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥ 35 ॥

Yaj jñātvā na punar moham evam yāsyasi Pāṇḍava /
yena bhūtāny aśeṣeṇa drakṣyasy ātmany atho mayi //35//

Pāṇḍava : O son of Pāṇḍu *yaj jñātvā* : knowing which *punah* : again *evam* : in this way *moham* : delusion *na yāsyasi* : will not get; *yena* : by which *bhūtāni* : beings *aśeṣeṇa* : in their entirety *ātmani* : in the Ātman *atha* : also *mayi* : in Me *ca* : and *drakṣyasi* : will see.

35. They will impart to you that divine knowledge by knowing which you will not again fall into such delusion, for you will then see all beings in their entirety in the Self and also in Me.¹³

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥ 36 ॥

Api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛttamaḥ /
sarvaṁ jñāna-plaven'aiva vrjinam śantarīṣyasi //36//

Tvam : You *sarvebhyaḥ* : of all *papebhyaḥ* : of sinful beings *pāpa-kṛttamaḥ* : the worst sinner *api chet asi* : even if you be, *sarvam* : all *vrjinam* : sin *jñānaplavena eva* : by the raft of divine knowledge alone *śantarīṣyasi* : will cross over.

36. Even if you happen to be the worst of sinners, you will surely go across all sin by the raft of divine knowledge.

यथैवांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्मससात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्मणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥ 37 ॥

*Yath'aidhām̐si samiddho'gnir bhasmasāt kurute'rjuna /
jñān'āgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā //37//*

Arjuna : O Arjuna samiddhaḥ : well kindled agniḥ : fire edhām̐si, fuel yathā : in which way bhasmasāt kurute : reduces to ashes tathā : in that way jñānāgniḥ : the fire of knowledge sarvakarmāṇi all works bhasmasāt kurute : reduces to ashes.

37. Just as a well-kindled fire reduces a heap of fire-wood to ashes, so does the fire of divine knowledge reduce all sins to ashes.

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥ 38 ॥

*Na hi jñānena sadṛśam pavitram iha vidyate /
tat svayam yoga-saṁsiddhaḥ kālen'ātmani vindati //38//*

Iha : In this world jñānena sadṛśam : equal to divine knowledge pavitram : purifier na vidyate : does not exist hi : verily; Yoga saṁsiddhaḥ : one who has attained perfection in Yoga kālena : in course of time tat : that knowledge ātmani : in oneself svayam : by oneself vindati : finds.

38. Verily there is nothing so purifying as knowledge in this world. One who is perfect in Yoga discovers it in oneself in course of time.

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ 39 ॥

*Śraddhāvāṁl lubhate jñānam tat-paraḥ saṁyat'endriyaḥ /
jñānam labdhvā parāṁ śāntim acireṇ'ādhigacchati //39//*

Śraddhāvān : One with deep faith tatparaḥ : one having zeal and devotion for it saṁyatendriyaḥ : one with subdued senses jñānam

labhate : gains the divine knowledge ; *jñānaṁ labdhvā* : having obtained knowledge, *acirena* : quickly *parāṁ* : supreme *śāntim* : peace, *adhiḡacchati* : gets.

39. A man of deep Faith (Śraddhā) obtains this divine knowledge, being full of zeal and devotion for it and endowed with mastery of the senses. Having obtained that knowledge, he is established in supreme peace very soon.¹⁴

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धघानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।

नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ 40 ॥

Ajñāś c'āśraddadhānaś ca saṁśaya'ātmā vinaśyati /
n'āyam loko'sti na paro na sukham saṁśaya'ātmanah //40//

Ajñāś : An ignorant man *ca* : and *āśraddadhānaś* : a man without faith *ca* : and *saṁśaya'ātmā* : a man whose nature is to doubt *vinaśyati* : is ruined ; *saṁśaya'ātmanah* : for the doubting man *ayam lokaś* : this world *na asti* : is not, *na paraś* : nor the world beyond, *na sukham* : nor happiness.

40. An ignorant man without any positive faith, who knows only to doubt, goes to ruin. To such a doubting soul there is neither this world nor the world beyond. There is no happiness for him.¹⁵

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।

आत्मघ्नन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥ 41 ॥

Yoga-saṁnyasta-karmāṇaṁ jñāna-saṁchinna-saṁśayam /
ātmavantaṁ na karmāṇi nibadhnanti Dhanañjaya //41//

Dhanañjaya : O Dhanañjaya! *yoga-saṁnyasta-karmāṇaṁ* : him who has abandoned work through Yoga of dedication and detachment *jñāna-saṁchinna-saṁśayam* : him whose doubts have been dispelled by divine knowledge *ātmavantaṁ* : him who is poised in the Self *karmāṇi* : works *na nibadhnanti* : do not bind.

41. O Arjuna! Works do not bind one who has abandoned them through Yoga consisting in dedication and detachment,

whose doubts have been dispelled by divine knowledge, and who is poised in the Self.

तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।

चित्त्वेन संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥ 42 ॥

Tasmād ajñāna-sambhūtaṁ hṛt-sthaṁ jñān'āsinā'tmanah |
chittv'ainam saṁśayaṁ yogam ātiṣṭh'ottīṣṭha Bhārata //42//

Tasmāt : Therefore *ātmanah* : of the Ātman *hṛtstham* : abiding in the heart *ajñānusambhūtam* : born of ignorance *enam* : this *saṁśayaṁ* : doubt *jñānāsinā* : by the sword of knowledge *chittvā* : cutting asunder *yogam* : Yoga *ātiṣṭha* : follow *Bhārata* : O scion of Bharata race! *uttiṣṭha* : arise.

42. Therefore cutting asunder the sceptical tendency of the heart by the sword of divine knowledge, betake yourself to Yoga (communion through sacrificial action) and arise, O scion of the Bharata race!

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगो
नाम चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥ 4 ॥

NOTES

1. *Vrs.5-7*: The deep mystery of Divine Incarnation is stated here. It is a mystery, because the infinite and the omnipotent being is, according to this doctrine, born as a man, a limited being. This is unaccountable and mysterious, yet a little thought will make it clear that the mystery in it is not more than what is involved in the Supreme Being manifesting Himself as the universe. So according to the *Bhāgavata* the first and the primeval Incarnation is the Puruṣa, the Cosmic Whole ensouled by Him, and out of this Puruṣa all the *Līlāvatāras* (sportive Descents) have come.

How the Incarnation takes place is indicated by two expressions *Ātma-māyā* and *Prakṛtiṃ svām adhiṣṭhāya*. *Ātma-māyā* is His 'inherent Power or Will.' No limited being can set any limitation to that Power. It is 'what makes the impossible possible'. It implies that manifestation in any limited or imperfect form does not affect His infinitude and perfection. In the Incarnation this infinitude and perfection are present, in spite of the human form through which these manifest. The worship of the Incarnation is therefore equal to the worship of the Supreme Being Himself.

Prakṛti is His material Nature, constituted of the three *Guṇas* of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. The body and mind of all beings are the combinations of their evolutes. But in their case these combinations are formed subject to *Karma*. But the body of the Incarnation is not subject to *Karma*, but is formed by the Divine will for the purpose of world-redemption. He is born not as a slave but as the master of Nature out of His free will, and His body is formed of pure *Sattva*. The individual, on the other hand, is born as the slave of *Karma* for attaining the individual ends of *Dharma*, *Ārtha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*. His body is formed mostly of *Tamas* and *Rajas*, and as he advances spiritually, a little of *Sattva* also enters into its make-up. Thus the embodiment of the Incarnation is vastly different from that of the individual. The individualisation of the Absolute Being, which is called an Incarnation, is an expression of self-mastery and is meant to serve a cosmic and not an individual purpose.

2. V.8: Here the purpose of a Divine Incarnation is given as the establishment of *Dharma* (righteousness), the destruction of the wicked, and the protection of the good. This description of the purpose of an Incarnation has to be widened, if we are to bring the lives of all recognised by the *Puranas* as Incarnations, within its ambit. Many of them like *Kapila*, *Nara-Narāyaṇa*, *Vyāsa*, *Buddha*, etc., were great teachers only and did not take any part in wars to destroy the wicked and protect the good. But their personalities, activities and teachings have had far-reaching effects on the life of man. In that way, they may be said to have established *Dharma*—a scheme of life which has man's spiritual elevation as its ultimate aim. The *Bhāgavata* adds one more purpose to those stated above. It is said that the life of a Divine Incarnation and his relation with His various associates and devotees leave behind a very rich tradi-

tion of holy acts and ways of living which form the subject-matter for devotional texts, and these become themes for pious contemplation by generations of their followers and devotees. Thus we have the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhāgavata*, which set forth the spiritual glory of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, and have formed the centre of the devotional life of countless generations. The teachings set forth in such texts have these wide-ranging effects on the life of man. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* itself is an example of it. So it is better to take the establishment of Dharma in a wider sense and interpret it as bringing a greater and greater awareness of man's spiritual goal, with which his worldly welfare also is closely associated.

A criticism is made of the Hindu theory of Incarnations that the great Incarnations like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa only kill evil ones who oppose them. Unlike Jesus Christ, Hindu Incarnations are not found to die for the salvation of man. In answer to this it may be said that the relation between Christ's death on the cross and man's salvation is a pure assumption which finds no justification except among those who share the Christian faith. The followers of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa also believe that by dying at the hands of these Divinities or even in their presence, their opponents gained salvation. So slaughter is one of the ways by which certain Incarnations, with particular world missions, bestowed their grace and gave salvation to those who cultivated the attitude of antagonism to them.

3. *Vrs.9-10*: The trans-physical importance of the divine Incarnation, already stated in the earlier note, is referred to in this passage. It is more often after his life-time than when he is alive, that an Incarnation receives wide recognition. After the Incarnation disappears, He is worshipped as the Deity by His followers, and his personality, deeds and teachings become the centre of a cult. A person may not understand philosophies and theologies, but through faith and devoted worship of the Incarnation, even a man of little learning can attain salvation. An Incarnation is always hypostatic with Brahman, and even after his physical body passes away, he is available for worship to those with faith. That faith consists in the capacity to grasp the identity of the Incarnation with the Deity Himself. Just as a backwater is linked with the sea and is one with it always, the Divine Incarnate also is always linked with the Infinite and Absolute Brahman. He is an expression

of the Anugraha-śakti or Grace of Brahman, and not a mere individual centre of power. So he is one with the eternal Godhead. The worship of any personalised conception becomes object for practising Bhakti and Jñāna, and a means for salvation, only if this faith is dominantly present in the mind of the worshipper. Bhakti, Jñāna and Mukti can be given only by the Supreme Being, and the Incarnation is essentially this Supreme Being—His Redeeming Power or His *Anugraha-śakti*.

4. V.11: This verse is the fundametal tenet of universal religion. Wherever worship is done, only the one Supreme Being is worshipped. No one, except the perfected sage, can worship Him in His fullness, since the human mind can grasp only limited aspects of Him. The more an individual or a community is evolved, the more noble and comprehensive will be their conception of the Deity. But the less evolved man too is adoring the same Deity, grasping such aspects of His as his undeveloped mind would allow. It is just like various forms being chipped from a huge block of marble. The more skilled the workman, the more artistic will be the form he chips out of the block. Even if it is crude, it is of the same block. Such are the various conceptions of the Deity; none can claim that his conception embraces the whole of Him, because He cannot be contained within the limitation of a mind, as a bottle cannot contain the whole of the sea. He reveals only what one is fit to receive. So according to the stages of human evolution, there will be different conceptions of the Deity, and the followers of one, even if they think that theirs is more refined, need not look down upon others as heathens or Kaffirs worshipping false deities, and consider themselves alone as the followers of the true Deity. For whatever the path, God approaches man through that path, and if the faith of the votary is genuine, he will be led to higher and higher forms of worship. So the followers of every religion must have respect for, and acceptance of, the faith and form of worship of other religions in spite of the differences that are sure to prevail in their ideologies and practices. For, it is the same God that is worshipped by them all. Just as all rivers, in spite of their divergent courses, lead to the same ocean, so do all faiths lead to Him i.e., take one to the same God who inspires them all. This Gitā teaching has been proclaimed to the modern world by Sri Ramakrishna in his saying: "As many faiths, so many paths."

5. V.12: Deities are the power aspects of the Divine worshipped in separation from Him, the Infinite and the Absolute Being. They are expressions of His power, but manifesting under limitations. Devotees who want boons, or divine favours, worship them according to the ritualistic code with offerings and Mantras and prayer for the fulfilment of their particular wants. But it is only He, the one God, who fulfils even these wants. It is only the Supreme Lord who fulfils such prayers to the Deities. These Deities are like the vassals and high officers of an emperor, and their powers are only the reflection of the Power of the Supreme Being. So even the fulfilments that come through the worship of the Deities come from Him, the Supreme Being only, as He alone is the Sat-chid-ānanda, the Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. But the ordinary votaries do not know this metaphysical truth and worship Deities as separate centres of high power. They may get their favours, but they do not gain any spiritual elevation by such adoration. Spiritual elevation means the attainment of Bhakti, Jñāna and Mukti. Only the Supreme Being, the Parabrahman, can grant these; no Deity as such can. But if any Deity is recognised by the worshipper as an expression of Sat-chid-ānanda Parabrahman, the Supreme Being, the worship becomes the adoration of the Supreme Being Himself. But then the devotee's outlook has to change from a seeker after petty worldly fulfilments to a seeker after Bhakti, Jñāna and Mukti. In the devotional tradition it is said that seeking boons relating to worldly fulfilments from the Sat-chid-ānanda Parabrahman is like praying to an emperor for a cucumber or a few brinjals. Spiritual excellences like Bhakti, Jñāna and Mukti are the only gifts to be sought of Him, and He is the only one that can grant these. The Incarnation too is one with the Supreme Being, and can bestow the highest spiritual blessings. Thus to seek one's daily bread of Parabrahman is too silly for words according to the devotional system of thought.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* seems to think that all the manifestations etc., as Deities are according to the attitude of the devotee. Tāmasika devotees are interested in such achievements as killing one's enemies, wreaking vengeance etc. They adore evil deities or psychic forces like spirits and goblins. The Rājasika devotees who seek worldly prosperity, success etc. adore Deities according to the Agamas with elaborate rituals and offering. The Mokṣa-seekers who are Sātvika in nature, do their duties as offerings to Him with-

out claiming the fruits for themselves and adore Him in a philosophical spirit. Superior to them are Nirguṇabhaktas, who have transcended the three Guṇas, as they abjure even liberation or Mukti as a desire, and seek the Lord for the sake of pure and unalloyed love, merely to serve Him with their whole being without the expectation of any return. Such devotees are above Guṇas, and they apprehend the Sat-chid-ānanda Parabrahman as such, without the colouring or association of the Guṇas. To all the others the Sat-chid-ānanda Parabrahman presents as Deities i.e., associated with the Guṇas of Prakṛti—Tamas, Rajas and Sattva or their combinations.

It must be clearly understood that this doctrine of the Deities is not polytheism. God is only one and the Deities are only His power manifestations in subtle dimensions, just as there are many power manifestations in Nature. When there is the recognition of this truth, their worship becomes the worship of the Supreme Being Himself.

6. *Vrs.13-15: Cāturvarṇya* or the social order of fourfold division is not the caste system, which is a system of social grouping solely based on birth. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, as conceived in the Vedas, is a division based on the natural constitution of man arising from the dominance of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, the constituents of Nature (Guṇas), as also on the duties they are fit to perform according to the aptitudes arising from their constitution. They are mere character types. In this context, the reference to *Cāturvarṇya* is meant not to single out any particular society, but to generalise about the institution of society among men. Just as He is the author of the Order of Nature, so is He the author of the Order of Society among men also. This can be inferred from the next line stating that though He is the creator of all these, the Order of Nature and the Order of Society, out of Himself and by Himself, He is really a non-creator, because He is not in the least affected by creation. This is reiterated in the next verse. He is the unchanging and all-comprehending Spirit both with creation and without creation. Those who contemplate on Him as unaffected by creation, will be unaffected by Karma.

7. *Vrs. 16-17:* There are two questions here at issue—one ethical and the other metaphysical. What is the distinction between

the right or the moral act, and the wrong or the immoral act—is the ethical question. What distinguishes action from inaction is a metaphysical question. In that great branch of philosophy called ethics, distinguished thinkers have attempted to find out a universally acceptable criterion of ethics without success. Pursuit of the *via media*, pleasure, the greatest good of the greatest number, the example of great men, doing to others what is good for oneself, the categorical imperative, conscience, etc., are among the rational criteria of moral action put forward. But the claim of every one of them is open to scathing criticism.

As against these rational theories, all the great religions of the world have put forward the theory that the right conduct is what the scripture has sanctioned. It is laid down in the *Gitā* too: “Therefore let *Śāstra* (Scripture) be your measuring rod for what ought and ought not to be done” (16.24). The idea of a scriptural sanction has got a great advantage in that it gives a definite objective criterion. But in application it has its own difficulties. When there are several scriptural texts in the same religion, especially in those having a very long evolution, there can be contradictions. Next, between the scriptures of several religions there may be no uniformity of view in many matters. There is also the danger of fundamentalism and impracticality and inapplicability due to change of time and circumstances, if scriptures are taken literally and as given once for all. Thus the difficulty in determining what is right action, and what is wrong action (*Karma* and *Vikarma*) is very real.

Another difficulty in evaluating *Karma* as stated in the passage, is metaphysical. What is real action and what is true inaction is difficult to determine, as shown in the next verse.

8. *Vrs.* 18-23: The really wise man is one who identifies himself with the *Ātman*, who is only the uninvolved Witness, in the midst of the non-stop activities of the body-mind. So also a wise man perceives that when an ignorant man wilfully keeps idle and says he has abandoned work and is restful, he is so only identifying himself with the body-mind without any perception of the *Ātman*-consciousness. In *Ātman*-consciousness alone is true *Naishkarmya* or worklessness. Besides, physical worklessness, whether forcefully adopted or born of idleness, is an effect of the will like all actions.

A person who has attained to this state of Atman-consciousness may be engaged in all kinds of action, but he is ever in Yoga or a state of unruffled non-attachment. This idea is elaborated in the succeeding verses upto verse 23:

9. V.24: This is the unitary spiritual consciousness arrived at through the practice of Karma Yoga. But whether this is attained through Karma Yoga where work is continued even after illumination, or it is attained through pure Jñāna Yōga where there is complete abandonment of all works even externally at a certain stage—is immaterial. What is important in understanding this passage is not any idea of super-imposing Brahman on various ingredients of a sacrifice like offerings, fire, sacrifice etc., as one would do in invoking the presence of a Deity in an image. For a man of illumination, unitary consciousness is an experience, and does not require any assertion of the will to invoke divinity in Yajña and its parts. Even the Yajña ritual is used here only as a symbol standing for the outlook of an illumined man on all work, not necessarily Yajña alone. Yajña is the holiest act known to man and it is therefore appropriate to use it for illustrating the outlook towards Karma of one who has reached the summit of wisdom through Karma Yoga. The actor, instruments of action, the object of action and action itself, he realises as grounded in the Supreme Spirit. So he is described as one having *Brahma-karma-samādhī*—one having Samādhī or absorption in Brahman even when performing action. A child seeing many interesting forms of animals and birds made of gold would be caught up with the forms that interest it, irrespective of the value of the substance it is made of. But a dealer in gold will only look at the weight of the gold and not at its form in evaluating it. The form is relevant to him only in so far as it reveals the substance which is his sole concern. Through all forms he sees only the substance. So through all actions and objects, the enlightened one sees their ground, the Sat-chid-ānanda Parabrahman.

10. Vrs.25-30: The meaning especially of the latter half of the verse is obscure. The meaning of the expression *Yajñena eva* is puzzling. Following Śrī Sankara we have taken it to mean the Ātman. The first Yajña is worship of Divine manifestations conceived as separate from oneself. It is Dravya Yajña, the offering of material objects.

The second is Jñāna Yajña, the sacrifice of the individual self in the universal self through enlightened understanding.

From this up to verse 30 various phases of man's physical, moral and mental life are taken and interpreted in terms of Yajña, the holiest and universally accepted rite of the followers of the Veda. They are roughly grouped as *Dravya-yajña* (sacrifice of material goods), *Tapo-yajña* (sacrifice through austerity), *Yoga-yajña* (sacrifice in the form of spiritual communion), *Svādhyāya-yajña* (sacrifice through religious study), and *Jñāna-Yajña* (sacrifice constituted of knowledge).

11. V.31: This is a very obscure verse. One can easily understand the idea of 'remnants' in material sacrifice, but it is puzzling to be told of 'remnants' in the other forms of mental, ethical and intellectual sacrifices alluded to in the foregoing verses. Commentaries are silent on this. Either we have to say that 'partaking of remnants' does not apply to them, but only to material sacrifices, in which 'remnant' means what is left of one's resources after giving their due shares to others—the Devas, Pitṛs (Manes), Ṛṣis, men and brute creations. Such sharing is called the *Panca-mahāyajña*—the five great sacrifices which all householders are asked to perform. We may add to this list of recipients the State also. People who do these sacrifices live a moral life, which is the basis of all spiritual development. For it involves the offering of things that are precious to oneself for the good of others, and thus it helps to eradicate self-centredness from the mind of man. Elimination of self-centredness is the prime requirement for all spiritual development. What is left afterwards for one's consumption is considered pure.

All the other non-material sacrifices referred to are directly related to the ethical and spiritual development of man. The difficulty is to know how the concept of 'remnant' is to be applied to them. Or the 'remnant' may be the time left after devoting oneself to these noble endeavours, which can be utilised for one's worldly affairs. Time is as precious as, or more so than, material wealth. Or the idea may be that in the practice of all these disciplines, the aspirant, besides achieving the specific purposes of the practice, has to develop the highly subtle and observant attitude of the pure subject without letting the mind get mixed up with

its form-taking tendency. This may be considered the sacrificial residue.

In short, whatever is left after offering to God and to one's fellow beings, whether it be food, wealth or time, is sanctifying and is comparable to the immortality-giving Amṛta or divine nectar. Its use by oneself is free from any stain and is conducive to one's spiritual progress.

12. *V.33*: If that is not so, man will be working like a machine, animal, or slave. In works for the fruits, the material gains may be more important for the worker, but in desireless action self-improvement is the result. It is not fruits but knowledge or spiritual enhancement that forms the rationale of the actions undertaken by a true spiritual aspirant.

13. *Vrs.35-38*: These verses are highly suggestive in their meaning and give the answer to any doubt as to whether the so-called spiritual awakening might be a purely subjective feeling without any reality value. This unitive experience swallows up the distinction between the subject and the object in one all-comprehensive understanding, resulting in a permanent transformation of consciousness in its sweep and depth. An analogy can be found in the relation between the dream and waking consciousness. In a dream, the dream ego has a real apprehension of several centres of consciousness and of objects external, common to himself and all the dream participants. If that dream ego gets a sense of awakening in the dream itself, he will perceive how all the dream entities are resting on him (the dream ego), and how, through himself, they are resting in the waking ego or the real man. The real man is ultimately the support of all—of the dream-ego as also of the egos of all the participants in the dream. The real waking consciousness is only the Parabrahman, the Supreme Being. All other centres of consciousness like the Jivas and all insentient entities are supported by His unitive consciousness. The new vision that the awakening of Jñāna gives may be analogous to this.

The other consequences that result from this awakening, effecting the enrichment of the knower's consciousness, are: (1) The effect of the transformation is permanent and one will never again fall into delusion leading to fear and suffering. (2) Just as

an awakened man is absolutely free from the effects of the actions of the dream ego, so the knowing one gets an enlightened and purified ego that is free from the imperfections, obsessions and sinfulness of the ego of ignorance; the erstwhile fool becomes wise, and the sinner a saint. As stated in the next verse, Jñāna is like a fire which burns up all rubbish and purifies everything. It would be seen that psychic powers, which popular imagination associates with saintly personages, are not according to the Gītā a sign of enlightenment or a necessary accompaniment.

14. V.39: The three qualities absolutely necessary for progress in spiritual life are mentioned here. These are: (1) *Sraddha* or Faith, (2) Ardent practice (3) Control of the senses. Of these, the first alone needs some explanation. *Sraddha* or Faith with a capital is not credulity and superstitious acceptance of unknown and unverifiable entities and claims of individuals. It is a positive attitude towards the ultimate verities that do not fall within the ken of the senses and reason, but on which indirect information can be had through authentic scriptures and genuine teachers. Faith is as much a unique quality of the human mind as reason. Animals have no capacity for faith even as they do not have for reasoning. Faith is sometimes condemned as blind and superstitious. But it is forgotten that parallel to this, reasoning too is bound to lead one to wrong conclusions unless those powers are refined by training. In the same way faith develops in the right direction as the man's heart becomes purer and purer by sense control and aspiration to know the meaning of life. Impure minds full of hankerings of a lower nature will open themselves only to superstitious and degrading practices. So, for a pure and sincere mind, faith is the greatest support in spiritual life. It is the first and foremost quality of a pure mind, that it is automatically receptive to the true and the good even with a partial understanding. *Sraddha* also means *Bhakti*.

Anything that has become a matter of faith in a man, unlike what is a mere belief, works as an operative force, enthusing him to put the content of his faith to practice, and to struggle towards the realisation of the ideal it presents. Ardour and sincerity are of the very stuff of faith. Faith in what, is a question unanswered in the text. The general answer of all authorities is—in the teaching of the scripture and of the Guru. Faith is a firm and active accep-

tance unlike belief or a conventional conformity which has no power to move a person to action.

15. V.40: While putting questions to gain a full understanding is a healthy habit, the tendency of doubting without any positive attitude to anything, is a disease comparable to hydromania—the tendency to unending washing with water on account of an incurable sense of impurity. A man's life will be paralysed, if some positive verities of a credible nature are not accepted after due enquiry and investigation.

Chapter V

कर्मसंन्यासयोगः

COMMUNION THROUGH RENUNCIATION

SUMMARY

The harmony of the paths of knowledge and work: (1-7) Feeling confused, Arjuna asks the Lord again: You seem to advocate the abandonment of all Karma in one breath and in the next praise the discharge of all actions in a disinterested manner. Which of these two should I follow for my good?

To this Sri Krishna replies: A contemplative life, characterised by the abandonment of all actions externally too, as also the discharge of all actions with detachment—are both valid spiritual paths leading to an identical spiritual goal. As paths they may look different, but in the end they are the same. There is, however, this important link between them. Without undergoing the discipline of detached action, it is vain to abandon all external action; for it will result only in idleness and hypocrisy. To an average aspirant it is a mere pitfall, while discriminative wisdom combined with detached action will take him forward gradually. So it comes to this, that the attainment of detachment in action is the very essence of spiritual life, and once this is acquired, it is immaterial whether one abandons actions externally or continues to perform them. For, one who is truly detached becomes, through that detachment, fit to be united with the Self of all—the Supreme Being who is the goal of all spiritual striving. He is no longer affected by action.

The way of illumined ones: (8-29) A truth-knower with such

detachment feels: "I do nothing in all the movements of the body, even in the very winking of the eyes." Having abandoned all actions, mentally, he rests in the nine-gated citadel of the body, undisturbed by the hurry and bustle of the activities of its members. In all his bodily and mental activities, his detachment is so complete that he feels that it is Prakṛti (Nature), of which the body-mind is a part, that works and reaps the fruits, not he, the Spirit, who is only the unconcerned witness of all these movements of Prakṛti. Remaining in that Spirit-consciousness, he is unperturbed by all experiences of life, pleasant or unpleasant. And in his dealings with all fellow beings—high and low, holy and unholy, men and animals—he has a sense of equality, knowing, as he does, that they are all the unaffected Spirit, and not the bodies to which alone the distinction of purity and impurity applies. Even in this embodied state, he is able to contain the pull of the passions and the senses. Knowing that contactual joys only bring on sufferings in the end he turns for satisfaction inward to the Bliss of the Supreme Spirit of whom he is a part. He becomes an adept in the practice of Samādhi, and at any time he can withdraw himself from the surface life of the body and be merged in the Bliss of the Spirit within.

Knowing Me, as the friend of all, and at the same time the maker and master of everything—to whom all worship and austerities have to be offered—man attains Supreme Peace.

अर्जुन उवाच

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।

यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Samnyāsam karmāṇām Kṛṣṇa punar yogam ca śaṁsasi /
yac chreya etayor-ekam tan me brūhi suniścitam //1,

Kṛṣṇa : O Krishna : karmāṇām : of works samnyāsam : abandon-
ment punaḥ : afterwards yogam : communion through work ca
and śaṁsasi : Thou praisest, etayoḥ : of these yat : which śreyas
the better in leading to one's good tat : that ekam : one suniścitan
with certainty me : to me brūhi : tell.

Arjuna said:

1. O Kṛṣṇa! Thou praïsest in one breath both abandonment of works and communion through their preformance. Now tell me with certainty which of them leads to one's good.¹

श्रीभगवानुवाच

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।

तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ 2 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

*Samñyāsaḥ karma-yogaś ca niḥśreyasa-karāv ubhau /
tayos tu karma-samñyāsāt karma-yogo viśiṣyate* //2//

Samñyāsaḥ : Abandonment of works *karmayogaḥ* : communion through work *ca* : and *ubhau* : both *niḥśreyasa-karau* : bestowing liberation; *tayoḥ* : of these *tu* : but *karmasamñyāsāt* : than abandonment of action *karmayogaḥ* : communion through work *viśiṣyate* : excels.

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Both abandonment of works and communion through works lead to liberation. But of them, communion through work excels over abandonment of work.²

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ 3 ॥

*Jñeyah sa nitya-samñyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati /
nirdvandvo hi mahā-bāho sukhaṁ bandhāt pramucyate* //3//

Mahābāho : O mighty-armed one! *yaḥ* : who *na dveṣṭi* : hates not, *na kāṅkṣati* : desires not *saḥ* : he *nityasamñyāsī* : as one ever-established in renunciation *jñeyah* : should be known. *Hi* : Indeed *nirdvandvaḥ* : one above such contraries *bandhāt* : from bondage *sukham* : easily *pramucyate* : is liberated.

3. O mighty-armed one! Whoever hates not, nor desires, should be known as one established in renunciation. Indeed,

one who is above such contraries is easily liberated from bondage.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।

एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यग्भयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ 4 ॥

*Sāmkhya-yogau pṛthag bālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ |
ekam apy āsthitāḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam* ||4||

Sāmkhya-yogau : *Sāmkhya* and *Yoga pṛthag* : as different *bālāḥ* : children *pravadanti* : speak, of, *na paṇḍitāḥ* : not the wise. *Ekam* : One of these *api* : even *samyak āsthitāḥ* : well set on *ubhayor* : of both *phalam* : the end *vindate* : obtains.

4. It is only the childish and not the wise that speak of *Sāmkhya* (or knowledge accompanied by abandonment of work) and *Yoga* (or communion through detached and dedicated work) as different. A person well-established in even one of these, attains the end that is the common goal of both. (That is, in the means they employ, they look different, but their end or ultimate purpose is identical.)

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।

एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ 5 ॥

*Yat sāmkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānam tad yogair api gamyate |
ekam sāmkhyam ca yogam ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati* ||5||

Sāmkhyaiḥ : By *Sāmkhya* *yat sthānam* : what state *prāpyate* : is reached, *tat* : that *yogaiḥ* : by *Yoga* *api* : also *gamyate* : is reached. *Sāmkhyam* : *Sāmkhya* *ca* : and *yogam ca* : and *Yoga* *ekam* : one *yaḥ* : who *paśyati* : sees, *saḥ* : he *paśyati* : sees,

5. The state which one attains by *Sāmkhya*, that same state is attained by *Yoga* too. He who sees both *Sāmkhya* and *Yoga* as one, sees indeed.

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्नुमयोगतः ।

योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ 6 ॥

Samñyāsas tu mahā-bāho duḥkham āptum ayogataḥ /
yoga-yukto munir brahma nacireṇ'ādhigacchati //6//

Mahābāho : O mighty-armed! *Samñyāsaḥ* : abandonment of work (which accompanies the Sāṁkhya discipline) *ayogataḥ* : for one without Yoga *āptum* : to attain to *duḥkham* : difficult; *tu* : but *yogayuktaḥ* : one established in Yoga *muniḥ* : sage *na cireṇa* : in no long time *Brahma* : Brahman *adhigacchati* : attains.

6. O mighty-armed Arjuna! True abandonment of work (which the discipline of Sāṁkhya implies) is difficult to practise for one who is not accomplished in the Yoga discipline of detached work. But the sage accomplished in Yoga attains to Brahman (renunciation?) in no long time.

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
 सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ७ ॥

Yoga-yukto viśuddh'ātmā vijit'ātmā jit'endriyaḥ /
sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtātma kurvann api na lipyate //7//

Yogayuktaḥ : Established in selfless and detached action *viśuddhātmā* purified soul *vijitātmā* : one of controlled mind *jitendriyaḥ* : one having the senses under control *sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā* : one who has identified one's self with the self of all, *kurvan api* : though working *na lipyate* : is not bound.

7. One who is established in selfless and detached action, who is pure, whose mind and senses are under control, and whose self is identified with the self of all—he is never bound, though he be engaged in work.³

नैव किंचित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
 पश्यन्पृथक्पृथक्पृथक्पृथक्पृथक्पृथक्पृथक्पृथक्पृथक्पृथक् ॥ ८ ॥

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
 इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९ ॥

*N'aiva kiñcit karomi'ti yukto manyeta tattva-vit /
paśyan śrīṣvan sprśan jighr'ann aśnan gacchan svapan śvasan //8//*

*Pralapan visrjan grhṇann unmiṣan nimiṣann api /
indriyāṇi'ndriy'ārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan //9//*

Yuktaḥ : A man of selfless and detached action *tattvavit* : knower of the Truth *paśyan* : seeing *śrīṣvan* : hearing *sprśan* : touching *jighran* : smelling *aśnan* : eating *pralapan* : conversing *grhṇan* : holding *gacchan* : walking *visrjan* : giving up *śvasan* : breathing *unmiṣan* : opening and closing the eyes *svapan api* : even sleeping, *indriyāṇi* : senses *indriyārtheṣu* : in objects of the senses *vartante* : are occupied with *iti dhārayan* : convinced thus, *kiñcit* : anything *na eva karomi* : I do not do, *iti manyeta* : should think thus.

8-9. I (the Self) do naught; only the senses are occupied with their objects—this should be the conviction of one who is detached in action and established in the truth (that he is the Ātman), even while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, conversing, holding, walking, giving up, winking and even sleeping.

ब्रह्मण्याघाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ 10 ॥

*Brahmaṇy ādhāya karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā karoti yaḥ /
lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram iv'ambhasā //10//*

Yaḥ : Who *karmāṇi* : works *Brahmaṇi* : in Brahman *ādhāya* : resigning *saṅgam* : attachment *tyaktvā* : abandoning *karoti* : does *saḥ* : he *ambhasā* : in water *padmapatram iva* : like the lotus leaf *pāpena* : by sin *na lipyate* : not affected.

10. One who resigns all his actions to Brahma and works without any personal attachments, is not soiled by sin, as a lotus leaf is not wetted by water.

उर कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।

योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वाऽऽत्मशुद्धये ॥ 11 ॥

*Kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalair indriyair api !
yoginaḥ karma kurvanti saṅgam tyaktvā'tma-buddhaye //11//*

Yoginaḥ : Yogins (spiritual aspirants) *saṅgam* : attachment *tyaktvā* : abandoning *ātmaśuddhaye* : for purification of mind *kāyena* : with body *manasā* : by mind *buddhyā* : by intellect *kevalaiḥ indriyaiḥ* *api* : even merely with the senses *karma* : works *kurvanti* : perform.

11. For the attainment of mental purity, spiritual aspirants (Yogins) perform action devoid of attachment, with their body, mind, intellect or even merely with the senses.

युक्तःकर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ 12 ॥

*Yuktaḥ karma-phalaṁ tyaktvā śāntim āpnoti naiṣṭhikīm !
ayuktaḥ kāma-kāreṇu phale saktō nibadhyate //12//*

Yuktaḥ : A man of restrained mind *karmaphalam* : the fruits of action *tyaktvā* : giving up *naiṣṭhikīm* : abiding *śāntim* : peace *āpnoti* : attains. *Ayuktaḥ* : One with unrestrained mind *kāma-kāreṇa* : prompted by desire *phale* : in the fruits *saktaḥ* : attached *nibadhyate* : gets bound.

12. By abandoning the fruits of action a man of restrained mind attains to abiding peace. But the one with unrestrained mind, being prompted by desire for the fruits of action, gets bound.

सर्वकर्मणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥ 13 ॥

*Sarva-karmāṇi manasā saṁnyasy'āste sukham vaśi !
nava-dvāre pure dehī n'aiva kurvan na kārayan //13//*

Vaśi dehī : A person who has controlled the senses *sarvakarmāṇi* : all actions *manasā* : with the mind *saṁnyasya* : abandoning *navadvāre pure* : in the corporeal mansion with nine gates *na eva*

kurvan : neither working *na kārayan* : nor causing work to be done
sukham : at ease *āste* : resides.

13. A self-controlled soul, having abandoned all work mentally (in the way described above), resides at ease (as a witness) in this corporeal mansion with nine gates, neither working nor causing work to be done.

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।

न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥ 14 ॥

Na kartṛtvaṁ na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ /
na karma-phala-saṁyogaṁ svabhāvas tu pravartate

[[14]]

Prabhuḥ : The sovereign soul *lokasya* : for the world *kartṛtvaṁ* : agency *na sṛjati* : does not cause, *karmāṇi na* : nor actions, *karma-phala-saṁyogaṁ na* : nor union with the results of action, *svabhāvaḥ tu* : Nature only *pravartate* : does this.

14. In regard to all beings in this world, the sovereign soul is not the cause of the sense of agency, nor of actions, nor of the fruition of actions. It is Nature that does all this.⁴

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।

अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥ 15 ॥

N'ādatte kasyacit pāpaṁ na c'aitva sukrtaṁ vibhuḥ /
ajñānen'āvṛtaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ

[[15]]

Vibhuḥ : The all-pervading one *kasyacit* : of any *pāpaṁ* : sin *na ādatte* : accepts, *sukṛtaṁ* : merits *ca na eva* : also not; *ajñānena* : by ignorance *āvṛtaṁ* : is covered *jñānaṁ* : knowledge, *tena* by that *jantavaḥ* : creatures *muhyanti* : are deluded.

15. The all-pervading Being does not accept the sins or merits of any one. Knowledge of the Divine Spirit is veiled in ignorance, and therefore beings are deluded.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।

तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥ 16 ॥

Jñānena tu tad ajñānam yeṣāṃ nāśitam ātmanaḥ /
teṣāṃ adityavaj jñānaṃ prakāśayati tat param //16//

Ātmanaḥ : Of the Ātman *jñānena* : by knowlege *tu* : but *yeṣāṃ* : whose *tat* : that *ajñānam* : ignorance *nāśitam* : is destroyed, *teṣāṃ* : of them *jñānam* : knowledge *ādityavat* : like the sun *tat param* : that supreme truth *prakāśayati* : reveals.

16. But in the case of those whose ignorance has been destroyed by the knowledge of the Ātman, to them that knowledge reveals the supreme Truth, as the sun does the objects of the world.

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्घृतकल्मषाः ॥ 17 ॥

Tad-buddhayas tad-ātmānas tan-niṣṭhās tat-parāyaṇāḥ /
gacchanty apunar-āvṛttim jñāna-nirdhūta-kalmaṣāḥ //17//

Tadbuddhayaḥ : Thinking always of Him, *tadātmānaḥ* : ever at one with Him, *tanniṣṭhāḥ* : deeply devoted to Him, *tatparāyaṇāḥ* : looking upon Him as one's goal, *jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ* : becoming purified of their sin by divine knowledge *apunarāvṛttim* : the state from which there is no return *gacchanti* : go.

17. Those who think of Him always, who are ever at one with Him, who are deeply devoted to Him, and who look upon Him as their goal, get purified of their sins by divine knowledge and go to the state from which there is no return to worldly life.

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ 18 ॥

Vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini /
śuni c'aiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ //18//

Vidyāvinayasampanne : Endowed with learning and humility, *brāhmaṇe* : in a Brāhmaṇa *gavi* : in a cow *hastini* : in an elephant *sunī ca eva* : and even in a dog *śvapāke ca* : and in an eater of dog's meat *pañḍitāḥ* : enlightened men *samadārāṇaḥ* : are seers of the same.

18. Enlightened men are those who see the same (i.e. the Ātman) in a Brāhmaṇa with learning and humility, in a cow, in an elephant, and even in a dog or in an eater of dog-meat (outcaste).

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।

निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ 19 ॥

Ih'aiva tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sām्यe sthitaṃ manaḥ /
nirdoṣaṃ hi samaṃ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitaḥ //19//

Yeṣāṃ : Whose *manaḥ* : mind *sām्यe sthitaṃ* : remain in this vision of sameness in all *taiḥ* : by them *iha eva* : here in this world itself, in the embodied state itself *sargaḥ* : cycle of births and deaths *jitaḥ* : has been overcome. *Brahma* : Brahman *nirdoṣaṃ* : the unsullied *samaṃ* : the same *hi* : verily, *tasmāt* : therefore *te* : they *Brahmaṇi* : in Brahman *sthitaḥ* : are established.

19. Even here in this embodied state, the cycle of births and deaths has been overcome by those who have this vision of sameness in all. Verily, Brahman is the Unsullied and the Pure. Therefore are those seers of sameness said to be established in Brahman.

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।

स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥ 20 ॥

Na prahr̥ṣyet priyaṃ prāpya n'odivijet prāpya c'ā priyam /
sthira-buddhir asaṃmūḍho brahma-vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ //20//

Sthirabuddhiḥ : Unperturbed *asaṃmūḍhaḥ* : undeluded *brahmaṇi* : in Brahman *sthitaḥ* : established *brahmanit* : the knower of Brahman *priyam* : pleasing *prāpya* : attaining *na prahr̥ṣyet* : does not

rejoice, *apriyam* : unpleasant *prāpya* : attaining *na udvijet* : is not agitated.

20. Unperturbed and undeluded, a knower of Brahman, who is established in Him, neither rejoices at pleasant experiences nor gets agitated at unpleasant ones.

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ 21 ॥

Bāhya-sparśeṣv asaktī'ātmā vindatyātmani yat sukham /
sa brahma-yoga-yuktātmā sukham akṣayam aśnute //21//

Bāhyasparśeṣu : In contactual experiences of the external world *asaktātmā* : one unattached *ātmani* : in the Self *yat* : what *sukham* : happiness *vindati* : obtains, *saḥ* : he *brahmayogayuktātmā* : with mind absorbed in communion with Brahman *akṣayam* : unending *sukham* : bliss *aśnute* : experiences.

21. An aspirant who is unattached to the contactual experiences of the external world, gains the joy that is in the Self within. He thereby enjoys unending bliss with his mind absorbed in communion with Brahman (who is both within and without).⁵

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥ 22 ॥

Ye hi saṁsparśa-jā bhogā duḥkha-yonaya eva te /
ādy-antavantaḥ Kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ //22//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *ye* : which *saṁsparśajāḥ* : born of contacts *bhogāḥ* : enjoyments *te* : they *duḥkha-yonayaḥ* ; cause of sorrow *eva* : only. *Hi* : For, *ādyantavantaḥ* : they are with a beginning and an end. *Budhaḥ* : The wise man *teṣu* : in them *na* : not *ramate* : delights.

22. Whatever enjoyments are there born of sense contact, they are sources of suffering only. For, they are with a beginning and an end. A wise man finds no delight in them.

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।

कामक्रोधोद्वेगं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥ 23 ॥

*Śaknoti 'h'aiva yaḥ soḍhum prāk śarīra-vimokṣaṇāt /
kāma-krodh'odbhavaṁ vegam sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ* //23//

Yaḥ : Which *naraḥ* : man *śarīravimokṣaṇāt prāk* : before release from the body *iha eva* : here itself *kāmakrodhodbhavam* : born of lust and anger *vegam* : agitation *soḍhum* : withstand *śaknoti* : is able, *saḥ* : he *yuktaḥ* : is the self-controlled, *saḥ* : he *sukhī* : is the happy man.

23. Here, even while in the body, whoever is able to withstand the agitation caused by lust and anger, he is the self-controlled one, he is the happy man.

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।

स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥ 24 ॥

*Yo'ntaḥ-sukho'nytar-ārāmas tathāntar-jyotir eva yaḥ /
sa yogī brahma-nirvāṇaṁ brahma-bhūto'dhigacchati* //24//

Yaḥ : Who *antaḥsukhaḥ* : is with happiness within, *antarārāmaḥ* : is with joy within, *tathā* : in the same way *yaḥ* : who *antarjyotiḥ* : experiences the light within *eva* : likewise, *saḥ* : that *yogī* : Yogin *brahmabhūtaḥ* : having become Brahman i.e., having realised his spiritual plenitude *brahmanirvāṇam* : beatitude in Brahman *adhigacchati* : attains.

24. The Yogin whose happiness is within, whose resting place is within, who likewise experiences the light within—he realises himself to be the Spirit and attains to beatitude in Brahman.⁶

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।

छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ 25 ॥

*Labhante brahma-nirvāṇaṁ ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇa-kalmaṣāḥ /
chinna-dvaidhā yuta-ātmanāḥ sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ* //25//

Kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ : Those who are sinless, *chinnadvaidhāḥ* : whose doubts have been destroyed, *yatātmānaḥ* : who are self-controlled, *sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ* : who rejoice in the good of all beings, *ṛṣayaḥ* : holy men *brahmanirvāṇam labhante* : attain to beatitude in Brahman.

25. Verily, they attain to beatitude in Brahman who are sinless, whose doubts have been destroyed, whose self is under their control and who rejoice in the good of all.

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अमितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥ 26 ॥

Kāma-krodha-viyuktānām yatīnām yata-cetasām /
abhito brahma-nirvāṇam vartate vidit'ātmanām //26//

Kāmakrodhaviyuktānām : Men who are devoid of lust and anger, *yatacetasām* : whose minds are controlled, *vidit'ātmanām* : who have known their real nature as the spirit, *yatīnām* : of the self-controlled ones *brahmanirvāṇam* : attainment of beatitude in Brahman *abhitaḥ vartate* : abides near at hand.

26. To those self-controlled ones (ascetics) who are free from lust and anger, who have controlled their minds and who have known their real nature as the spirit—the attainment of beatitude in Brahman is near at hand.

स्पर्शं कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ 27 ॥

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छामयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ 28 ॥

Spars'ān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṁś cakṣuś c'aiv'āntare bhruvoḥ /
prāṇ'āpanau samau kṛtvā nās'ābhyantara-cāriṇau //27//

Yat'endriya-mano-buddhir munir mokṣa-parāyaṇaḥ
vigat'ecchā-bhaya-krodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ //28//

Bāhyān : External *sparsān* : contacts *bahiḥ kṛtvā* : excluding *cakṣuḥ* : the look *bhruvoḥ* : of the brows *antare eva* : between (*kṛtvā* : fixing), *nāsābhyantaracārīṇau* : moving in the nostrils *prāṇāpāṇau* : Prāṇa (out-going breath) and Apāna (incoming breath). *samau ca kṛtvā* : equalising or making even *yatendriyamano-buddhiḥ* : with senses, mind and intellect under control, *vigatecchā-bhayakrodhaḥ* : devoid of desire, fear and anger *mokṣaparāyaṇaḥ* : aspiring for liberation alone *muniḥ* : meditative man *yaḥ* : who *saḥ* : he *sadā* : ever *muktaḥ* : liberated *eva* : indeed.

27-28. Excluding all sense perceptions; fixing the look between the eye brows; steadying the flow of Prāṇa (out-going breath) and Apāna (incoming breath) through the nostrils; controlling the senses, mind and intellect; devoid of desires, fear and anger; and aspiring for liberation alone—a meditative sage so established, is liberated for ever.

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।

सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ 29 ॥

Bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram /
suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati ||29||

Yajñatapasām : Of sacrifice and austerity *bhoktāraṁ* : recipient, *sarvaloka-maheśvaram* : the supreme Lord of all the worlds, *sarvabhūtānām* : of all the worlds *suhṛdam* : friend *mām* : Me *jñātvā* : knowing, *śāntim* : peace *ṛcchati* : attains.

29. Knowing Me, the recipient of all worship and austere practices, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, and the friend of all beings, man attains to eternal peace.

ओं तत्सविति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां

योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मसंन्यासयोगो

नाम पञ्चमोऽध्यायः ॥ 5 ॥

NOTES

1. *V.1*: This question of Arjuna expresses more or less the same doubt which he had at the beginning of the third chapter. In spite of all the disquisitions of Kṛṣṇa in Chapters II and IV, Arjuna fails to understand the relevance of work. The question here is put in a slightly different form. The praise that is bestowed on both work and the workless state simultaneously has only added to his confusion. He wants a clear and unambiguous answer, as to what he should follow.

2. *Vrs.2-6*: The contradiction in the situation is evident in Kṛṣṇa's answer. It is a clear question, and the answer too is supposed to be clear. In Ch. III, Kṛṣṇa has clearly stated that there are two ways proclaimed by him—the path of the Sāṃkhya or pure contemplatives, and the path of the Yogins or active communists. Here he says that Sāṃkhya and Yoga are one and the same and to say they are different is only children's prattle and not the words of mature thinkers. Is not Kṛṣṇa contradicting himself here, is a doubt that will come to any one's mind. The clarification that Kṛṣṇa himself gives occurs immediately in verse 4: "A person well established in even one of these, attains the end that is the common goal of both." It is clear from this that Kṛṣṇa would prefer to say that as paths they are distinct, but the spiritual realisation they confer on the aspirant is the same.

The distinctiveness of both these paths is thus clearly given as far as the Gita is concerned. But the confusion comes in considering: (1) Are these two paths open to one according to one's unrestricted choice? (2) Do they impinge upon each other at any stage of man's spiritual development to form a combined discipline or are they absolute antipodes as disciplines? These two alternatives look as possibilities even when the autonomy of the two paths is granted.

The answer of traditional Kevalādvaita to this is as follows: There is absolute contradiction between contemplativeness of the Sāṃkhya and communion through action of the Yoga discipline. One who is fit for it, can practise the contemplative discipline without going in for work at all. By work or Karma, the ancients mainly meant the *Śrauta-karma*, the works enjoined by the Vedas,

which were purely ritualistic, and *Smārta-karma* or duties imposed by the *Smṛties* (Law Codes), which were partly ritualistic and partly the duties accruing to one according to one's state in life. It was held that by performing these works one will get that purity of mind and intellect, which alone will give that competence needed for the contemplative discipline called here *Sāṃkhya*. When one has attained to that competence, one should abandon all Karma. To continue the practice of Karma Yoga afterwards will be like husking the already husked paddy. So it is said, for the *Yogi* who is ascending along the path of Yoga, Karma is the means, and for him who has attained to perfection, tranquillity or workless contemplation is the means (Ch. VI-3). Besides, Karma strengthens the ego and takes the multiplicity for granted. It makes the mind outward-going while the Vedantic reflection consists in asserting the mere phenomenality of the ego and of the world of multiplicity. There is therefore a contradiction between Karma and this type of contemplation, and Karma has therefore to be completely abandoned at a certain stage.

In the earlier stages of the aspirant's life, Karma and devotional meditation of the *Upasana* type may be combined, but the pure contemplative discipline of practising unitary Consciousness (*Jñāna-niṣṭhā*) involves a type of contemplation where meditation of the *Upāsana* type has no place, and Karma of any kind, much less. Hence their abandonment is advocated.

The advocates of total *Karma-sanyāsa* maintain that such aspirants are required to abandon Karma of every kind, ritualistic and social, except that of collecting holy alms for the bare maintenance of the body (cf. IV. 21.)

No one can deny that the *Gītā* speaks in several places of such an absolutely pacific and contemplative perfection. Such a life was associated with the *Sannyāsin*. In the Vedic society, if a *Brāhmaṇa* or *Kṣatriya* lived without performing his ritualistic duties of the *Smārta* and *Śrauta* type, it was considered degrading. Those who had gone beyond the need of it were therefore expected to take to the *Āśrama* of the *Sannyāsins*, who were free from the obligation to do the *Śrauta* and *Smārta Karmas*. In much of the criticism of Karma by Vedantic *Ācāryas*, they seem to have ritualism in view chiefly. Though they were aware of social duties

for the good of society, they seem to get overlooked in their criticism, although in the Gita the social duties of man alone are taken into consideration. Beyond a criticism of Vedic ritualism in verses 42-44 of the second chapter and a favourable reference in verses 10 to 16 of the third chapter, there is little reference to them in the Gītā, whereas the social duties of man are elaborately described and advocated. For a modern student of the Gītā, too, ritualistic work is not of much significance. He is only concerned with works for the improvement of the quality of man's life on earth, and he will be interested only to know what the Gītā has to say on this question—whether he has to abandon the pursuit of all altruistic values also at some stage in the pursuit of the highest spiritual ideal.

While the Gītā maintains that there is such a path, which is called Sāṁkhya, it points to the existence of an alternative path, which it calls Yoga or Karma Yoga, which is self-sufficient in itself. It is said in verses 1 to 4 of Ch. IV that this tradition was known among *Rajarṣis*, but was forgotten in course of time and that Kṛṣṇa was reviving it through the instruction he was giving to Arjuna.

That this path is in itself self-sufficient, that man need not necessarily abandon the pursuit of social welfare through dedicated and non-attached action and adopt the discipline of pure Sāṁkhya of worklessness both internal and external, is borne out by the following passage (V.6): "The sage accomplished in Yoga attains to Brahman in no long time." The meaning of this obviously is that he need not necessarily take to any new discipline. By continuing the practice of Karma Yoga, the highest *summum bonum* will certainly be his. This was the view of Swami Vivekananda also, as expressed in his Karma Yoga lectures.

But pure Advaita interpreters will not concede the above interpretation of Verse 6, as according to them the discipline of Yoga is only for mental purification. So they interpret the word Brahman as 'renunciation', the justification for it being that renunciation is the proximate condition for attaining the spiritual *summum bonum*. This only shows how even orthodox commentators have to go out of the way to interpret the word Brahman occurring in the Gītā. This makes the modern interpreter's view that words like Brahman, Brahma bhuta etc., are often used in the Buddhistic

sense, look credible. If Brahman is interpreted here as that unruffled state of peace and poise identical with the state of *Sthitaprajña* of the 2nd chapter, which precedes the supreme spiritual illumination as described in chapter 18, the expression becomes understandable. See notes 6 of 14th and 9 of 18th chapters for more information on the use of the word Brahman.

3. *Vrs. 7-13*: The state of equipoise and detachment that is gained in course of time through Karma-Yoga, or unselfish and dedicated action is described in these verses.

The expression *sarva-bhūtātma-bhūjātmā* in *V. 7* need not necessarily mean the unitary consciousness of pure Advaita. For the state described here is that intermediary spiritual awareness, which has been described by epithets like *Brahma-bhūta*, *Brahma-bhūyam* etc. It is the enlarged and unperturbed state of consciousness which is the prelude to higher realisations. A person who has attained to that stage is said to attain to a state described in the 18th chapter of the Gita as *samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu*—of being alike to all beings. The shell of self-centredness is broken in him, giving way to a feeling of identity of interest and experience with all. The present phrase also means the same—a sense of intense kinship and sharing with all.

The expression *brahmaṇyādhyāyu* in Verse 10 does not seem to indicate the Supreme Parabrahman but only Prakṛti. Many of the actions of the body and mind are enumerated in this context in verses 8 and 9 and they are spoken of as 'deposited in Brahman' in Verse 10. Body and mind are the products of Prakṛti or Nature, and to recognise this, and consequently feel unegoistic, is 'depositing one's actions in Brahman' in this context. For more information on the use of the word Brahman, see notes 6 of 14th and 9 of 18th chapters. One of the greatest difficulties in understanding the meaning of the Gītā is the widely varying senses in which it is used in different contexts. The supreme Being, Nature, Jivā, Vēda, Omkāra, renunciation, an unruffled state of mind, etc., are some of the meanings it is made to convey in different contexts.

4. *Vrs. 14-15*: The Ātman is only the uninvolved witness in whose presence Nature and its evolutes function, giving a false sense of involvement to the Spirit. The Ātman is not actually

involved, and his pristine purity is not affected. Knowledge is the recognition of this truth and the consequent fading of ignorance resulting from identification with the movements of Nature. The words *Prabhu* and *Vibhu* in these two verses can mean only the 'Lord of the body' or *Jīva*, and not God, the Lord of the universe. The context warrants this only. For, immediately before, in verse 13, reference is made to the *Jīva* as sitting in the 'nine-gated city of the body' as the witness, neither acting nor making one act. Hence the merit and demerit of the actions of the body-mind cannot really stain and change the nature of the *Jīva*. The experience of such stain is due to identification with the body-mind, which does not effect any permanent change in the nature of the *Ātman*.

5. V.21: In this and in many of the preceding verses (see verses 6, 10, 19, 25, 26 etc.) expressions like 'Brahman', 'Brahma-bhūta' and 'Brahma-nirvāṇa' are used. The use of the word *Brahma* in the *Gītā* is often ambiguous and problematic. The word has been used to mean the Supreme Being, *Prakṛti* or Nature, the *Jīva* or the *Ātman*, and the *Veda*. Here in this and the earlier verses the word can mean the Self or the *Ātman*. In this verse 21, the joy that is in the Self within, is identified with the bliss of Brahman. For those systems that accept the identity of the *Ātman* with Brahman, this poses no difficulty. But for philosophies which make a distinction between *Ātman* and Brahman, *Ātmajñāna* (or knowledge that one is the immaterial Self or *Ātman*) is the stepping stone to *Brahma Jñāna* (or the Knowledge of one's right relationship with Brahman). On the basis of this difference in their metaphysical position, there can be difference in the interpretation given to this and other similar verses by different schools of *Vedānta*.

6. Vrs.24-25: Literally the translation would be 'the *brahma-bhūta* (one who has become Brahman) attains to *brahma-nirvāṇa* (cessation in Brahman)'. We have given a simple non-technical translation. The expressions bristle with difficulties in interpreting. Some Western scholars find Buddhist influence in this introduction of the concept of *Nirvāṇa* (blowing out of self-conscious individuality and desires as a light is put out). In this connection, note 6 of 14th chapter and note 9 of 18th chapter may be read for more details.

That the meaning of these words is not something negative

but a positive experience of the Divine in fullness is made plain in 18. 54-56: "Brahman-become, with self serene. free from sorrow and desire, and the same to all beings, he gains supreme devotion to Me. By devotion he comes to know Me, as I really am—how great I am and who I am. Having known Me thus in truth, he enters into Me. Even though he may be engaged in all kinds of works, such a person, being completely given over to Me, attains to the eternal and undecaying state due to My grace." Whether this consummation offered to the human spirit here is purely Advaitic i.e., the result of the sublation of all diversity, or whether it is qualified Advaitism i.e., the result of the subordination of all diversity to a Supreme Unity, is for the student to judge. One thing seems certain if we take these verses together. There is no contradiction here between the attainment of such a state and work.

It also looks that a distinction is made between a '*Brahma-bhūta*' (the Brahma-become) and one who has attained *Brahma-nirvāṇa*. It looks that the former is the stepping stone to the latter, and not in itself the terminal state. The *Brahma-bhūta* becomes fit to get supreme devotion, which helps him to have a full understanding of the Divine and enter into the Divine Consciousness. In terms of the terminology used by Sri Ramakrishna in his teachings, the former is Jñāna and the latter Vijñāna. The Jñāni looks upon the world as a mere appearance, but the Vijñāni sees it as a Divine Play, and action in it for him is being a participant in that Divine play.

Chapter VI

ध्यानयोगः

COMMUNION THROUGH MEDITATION

SUMMARY

Detached work leads to Enlightenment: (1-9) Sri Kṛṣṇa said: The real Sannyāsin and Yogin is the man who works with detachment in mind, not the one who puts on the symbols of renunciation and avoids works. Real Sannyāsa and real Karma Yoga are not so different as people think. Both have the common point that the mind should have the capacity to abandon all hankerings and attachments, hopes and expectations. The only difference is that to one who is in the early stages of the discipline, struggling to gain this non-attached condition, work in a literal sense is essential, because he would otherwise lapse into idleness and hypocrisy. Along with work he should practise introspection and meditation also; for without that he cannot keep up the sense of detachment, dedication and desirelessness while working. Work or Karma becomes Yoga (Karma Yoga), only under this condition of supplementing work with meditation. But for one who has become established in this detachment, Śama or introspection becomes the main means for further progress. The test of having reached this state is that there is no expectation of fruits and no sense of agency. One with such attainment can abandon actions without any fear of degeneration, but need not necessarily do so. While practising the introspective discipline intensively, he can engage himself also in actions that are contributive to the welfare of the world. Whereas action is a 'must' for the former, it is only a 'may' for the latter. But the cultivation of a detached mind

free from hopes and expectations, is common and essential to both.

Practice of Meditation: (10-32) The practice of meditation is as follows: The mind of one who has succeeded in it is compared to a steady flame undisturbed by winds. He becomes established in the experience that he is the Spirit and not the body, and consequently he is steeped in the non-contactual, intellectually intuited Bliss that is of the nature of the Spirit. It is a state, on being established in which nothing else is felt as attractive or valuable, and one is not in the least distracted even by great worldly sorrows. An adept in it also attains to a new vision of the totality of existence, the experience of the Divine as residing in all entities and all entities as residing in the Divine.

The Difficulty of Inward Concentration: (33-47) Arjuna now raises two questions: As the mind is very unsteady the work of making it steady is as difficult as stilling the air. How could this then be accomplished? Also what is the fate of one who attempts this very difficult discipline and fails to achieve much success even by the end of his life? Is he to be a lost soul, his whole life's effort having ended in failure?

To these doubts Sri Krishna answers: Though the mind is difficult to control, this can be done by steady practice and cultivation of dispassion for worldly enjoyments, coupled with strong aspiration for the higher life. If the latter is not present, practice alone will not be of much use. Failure in Yoga is largely due to the absence of the latter quality. But there is no absolute failure in Yoga. If a person dies before attaining to success in it, he carries the legacy of his present life into his next embodiment. He will be born under conditions that are very favourable to spiritual development. With the power of his earlier practice as his background, he will strive forward, life after life, until success is attained. Thus nothing is lost by one striving in the spiritual path.

One practising the discipline of concentration is immensely greater than one engaging himself entirely in scripture-ordained works, or in intellectual studies of Vedanta. But the practice of concentration should be accompanied with intense faith and devotion to the Lord. Then Yoga becomes the most potent spiritual discipline.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥ १ ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

Anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ !

sa saṁnyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnir na c'ākriyaḥ //1//

Karmaphalam : The fruits of action *anāśritaḥ* : without dependence on *kāryaṁ karma* : work that ought to be done or duty *yaḥ* : who *karoti* : performs, *saḥ* : he *saṁnyāsī ca, yogī ca* : both Sannyāsī and Yogī, *na niragniḥ* : not one without fire; *akriyaḥ* : one who avoids work *na ca* : not.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. It is the man who performs his duties without dependence on the fruits that deserves to be called a Sannyāsī (renouncer) and a Yogī, not the one who keeps no fire or avoids works.

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।

न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २ ॥

Yaṁ saṁnyāsam iti prāhur yogaṁ taṁ viddhi Pāṇḍava !

na hy asaṁnyasta-saṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana //2//

Yaṁ : What *saṁnyāsam* : renunciation *iti prāhuḥ* : is called as *taṁ* : that *yogaṁ* : communion through action *viddhi* : know *Pāṇḍava* : son of Pāṇḍu. *Hi* : For *asaṁnyastasaṅkalpaḥ* : one who has not abandoned subtle hankerings *kaścana* : any one *yogī* : a practitioner of spiritual communion through work *na bhavati* : cannot become.

2 O son of Pāṇḍu! What is called Sannyāsa or renunciation, know that to be identical with Yoga or discipline of selfless action. For, whoever has not abandoned subtle hankerings and self-centred objectives, can never become a Yogī, or a practitioner of spiritual communion through works.¹

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥ 3 ॥

Ārurukṣor muner yogam karma kāraṇam ucyate /
yog'ārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate //3//

Yogam : Spiritual communion *ārurukṣoḥ* : of one wishing to ascend *muneḥ* : for the sage *karma* : work *kāraṇam* : means *ucyate* : is said to be. *Yogārūḍhasya* : Of one who has ascended to Yoga *tasya* : his *śamaḥ* : quiescence *eva* : verily. *kāraṇam* : cause *ucyate* : is said.

3. For one who desires to ascend the path leading to the heights of spiritual communion (Yoga), detached work is the means. For one who has ascended it, quiescence is verily the means.²

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसंकरपसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ 4 ॥

Yadā hi n'endriyārtheṣu na karmasv anuṣajjate /
sarva-saṅkalpa-saṁnyāsī yog'ārūḍhas tad'ocyate //4//

Yadā : When *indriyārtheṣu* : in the objects of the senses *na anuṣajjate* : is not attached, *karmasu na* : nor to works, *tadā* : then *sarva-saṅkalpasamnyāsī* : that one who has abandoned all subtle hankerings and objectives *yogārūḍhaḥ* : ascended the heights of Yoga *ucyate* : is said to be.

4. When one ceases to be attached to sense objects and to one's actions, then that one, who has thus abandoned all subtle hankerings and self-centred objectives, is said to have ascended the heights of spiritual communion (Yoga).

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ 5 ॥

Uddhared ātmanā'tmānam n'ātmānam avasādayet /
ātm'aiva hy ātmano bandhur ātm'aiva ripur ātmanaḥ //5//

Ātmanā : By one's higher self *ātmānam* : the lower self *uddharet* : should raise, *ātmānam* : the higher self *na avasādayet* : not depress. *Hi* : For *ātmanāḥ* : of the lower self *bandhuḥ* : friend *ātmā eva* : is verily the higher self; *ātmanāḥ* : of the higher self *ātmā eva* the lower self alone *ripuḥ* (is) the enemy.

5. One should uplift one's lower self by the higher self. One should not depress or downgrade one's self. For the self verily is both the friend and the foe of the self.³

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।

अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥ 6 ॥

Bandhur ātmā'tmanas tasya yen'ātm'aiv'ātmanā jitaḥ /
anātmanas tu śatrutve vartet'ātm'aiva śatruvat //6//

Yena : By whom *atmanā eva* : by the higher self *atmā jitaḥ* : the lower self is subdued *tasya* : of him *bandhuḥ* : friend *ātmā eva* : is verily the self himself. *Anātmanas tu* : For the man with the lower self unconquered *ātmā eva* : he himself *śatruvat* : like a foe *śatrutve* : in the role of an enemy *varteta* : remains.

6. To him who has subdued the lower self by the higher self, the self acts like a friend. But to him who has lost his higher self by the dominance of the lower one, the self functions as the enemy, always hostile to him.

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥ 7 ॥

Jit'ātmanas praśāntasya param'ātmā samāhitaḥ /
śit'oṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu tathā mān'āpamānayoḥ //7//

Jitātmanas : For one who has conquered the mind *praśāntasya* : of the serene *paramātmā* : the Self *samāhitaḥ* : remains steady and unperturbed *śitoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu* : in heat and cold, as also in pleasure and pain *tathā* : in the same way *mānāpamānayoḥ* : in honour and dishonour.

7. In one who has conquered his mind, the Self remains steady and unperturbed in the experience of the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour.

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥ 8 ॥

Jñāna-vijñāna-tṛptātmā kūṭa-stho vijit'endriyaḥ
yukta ity ucyate yogī sama-loṣṭ'āśma-kāñcanaḥ //8//

Jñānavijñānatṛptātmā : One whose spirit has attained contentment through wisdom and experience *kūṭasthaḥ* : unperturbed *vijiten-driyaḥ* : one who has conquered the senses *samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ* : to whom a lump of earth and a bar of gold are alike *yogī* : the Yogī *yuktaḥ iti* : as steadfast in spiritual communion *ucyate* : is said to be.

8. A Yogin whose spirit has attained contentment through knowledge and experience, who is unperturbed, who has subdued his senses, to whom a lump of earth and a bar of gold are alike—such a Yogī is said to have attained steadfastness in spiritual communion.

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ 9 ॥

Suhr̥n-mitr'āry-udāsīna-madhyastha-dveṣya-bandhuṣu |
sādhuṣv api ca pāpeṣu sama-buddhir viśiṣyate //9//

Suhr̥n-mitrāryudāsīna-madhyastha-dveṣya-bandhuṣu : Towards friend, comrades, the indifferent, the neutral, the inimical, and the ally *sādhuṣu* : towards the good *api pāpeṣu ca* : and even towards the wicked *samabuddhiḥ* : one who is equal-minded *viśiṣyate* : is noted for his excellence.

9. Specially noteworthy in excellence is he who is even-minded in his outlook on friend and foe, on comrade and

stranger, on the neutral, on the ally, on the good, and even on the evil ones.

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।

एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ 10 ॥

Yogī yuñjīta satatam ātmānam rahasi sthitaḥ /
ekākī yata-citt'ātmā nirāśīr aparigrahaḥ

//10//

Yogī : Yogī, an aspirant after Yoga *yatacittātmā* : with the mind and body under control *nirāśīh* : without hopes and expectations *aparigrahaḥ* : without possessions *ekākī* : alone *rahasi sthitaḥ* : remaining in solitude *ātmānam* : the self (the mind) *satatam* : always *yuñjīta* : let him practise spiritual communion.

10. Let a Yogin constantly practise spiritual communion, residing alone in a solitary spot, desireless, possessionless, and disciplined in body and mind.

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ 11 ॥

तत्रैकाम्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।

उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ 12 ॥

Śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthīram āsanam ātmanah /
n'ātyucchritam n'ātinīcam cail'ājina-kuśottaram

//11//

Tatr'aikāgram manah kṛtvā yata-citt'endriya-kriyah /
upaviśya'āsane yuñjyād yogam ātma-viśuddhaye

//12//

Śucau deśe : In a clean place *nātyucchritam* : not very high *nātinīcam* : not very low *cailājina-kuśottaram* : with cloth, skin and grass in the reverse order *sthīram* : steady *ātmanah* : for oneself *āsanam* : seat *pratiṣṭhāpya* : having established, *tatra āsane* : on that seat *upaviśya* : sitting *manah* : mind *ekāgram kṛtvā* : making onepointed *yata-chittendriya-kriyah* : with the functions of the mind and the senses under control *ātmaviśuddhaye* : for the purification of the self *yogam yuñjyād* : let him practise spiritual communion.

11-12. At a clean spot, which is neither too high nor too low, a seat should be made with Kuśa grass, spread over with a skin and a cloth. Firmly seated on it, the Yogī should practise spiritual communion, with mind concentrated and with the working of the imaginative faculty and the senses under control, for self-purification.

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।

संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥ 13 ॥

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥ 14 ॥

Samam kāya-śiro-grīvaṁ dhārayann acalam sthiraḥ /
samprekṣya nāsik'āgraṁ svaṁ diśaś c'āvalokayan //13//

Prasānt'ātmā vigata-bhīr brahmacārivrate sthitaḥ /
manaḥ samyamya maccitto yukta āsita matparaḥ //14//

Kāyaśirogrīvaṁ : Body, head and neck *samam* : erect *acalam* : firm *dhārayan* : holding, *svam* : one's own *nāsikāgraṁ* : tip of the nose *samprekṣya* : gazing *diśaś ca na avalokayan* : without looking round, *vigatabhīḥ* : fearless *prasāntātmā* : serene *brahmacārivrate sthitaḥ* : established in the vow of continence, *manaḥ* : mind *samyamya* : restrained, *maccittaḥ* : meditating on Me *matparaḥ* : with Me as the highest end *yuktaḥ āsita* : let him sit in spiritual communion.

13-14. Holding the body, head and neck erect, motionless and firm, gazing at the tip of the nose and not round about, fearless, serene, restrained in mind, and established in the vow of continence, he should sit in spiritual communion with Me, looking upon Me as his highest and most precious end.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।

शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ 15 ॥

Yuñjann evaṁ sadā'tmānaṁ yogī niyata-mānasaḥ /
śāntim nirvāṇa-paramāṁ mat-samsthām adhigacchati //15//

Niyatamānasaḥ : With mind restrained from going towards objects
Yogī : *Yogī sadā eva* : always *atmānam yujjan* : uniting himself
 with the Supreme Spirit in spiritual communion *matsamsthām* :
 enduring establishment in Me *nirvāṇa paramām* : supreme salvation of bliss
śāntim : peace *adhigacchati* : attains to.

15. With the mind restrained from going outward to objects and always uniting with the Supreme in spiritual communion, the Yogī attains to Peace, which is supreme salvation and enduring establishment in My state.

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।

न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥ 16 ॥

N'ātyaśnatas tu yogo'sti na c'aikāntam anaśnataḥ /
na c'ātisvapna-śīlasya jāgrato n'aiva c'ārjuna

//16//

Arjuna : O Arjuna *atyāśnataḥ* : to one who eats too much *yogaḥ na asti* : Yoga is not possible, *ekāntam anaśnataḥ ca* : also for one who eats too little, *ātisvapna-śīlasya na* : nor for one who sleeps too much, *jāgrataḥ ca na eva* : nor for one who keeps awake too much.

16. O Arjuna! Success in Yoga is not for those who eat too much, nor for those who eat too little. It is not also for those given to too much sleeping, nor to those who keep vigil too long.

युकाहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।

युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ 17 ॥

Yukt'āhāra-vihārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu /
yukta-svapn'āvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā

//17//

Yuktāhāra-vihārasya : For one temperate in food and recreation
karmasu : in work *yuktaceṣṭasya* : detached and self-restrained
yukta-svapnāvabodhasya : regulated in sleep and in vigils *yogaḥ* :
 Yoga *duḥkha-hā* : destructive of the travail of Samsāra *bhavati* :
 beco

17. For one who is temperate in food and recreation, who is detached and self-restrained in work, who is regulated in sleep and in vigil—Yoga brings about the cessation of the travail of Samsāra.

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥ 18.॥

Yadā viniyatam cittam ātmany ev'āvatiṣṭhate

niḥsprhaḥ sarva-kāmebhyo yukta ity ucyate tadā //18//

Yadā : When *viniyatam* : disciplined *cittam* : mind *ātmani eva* : in the Ātman alone *āvatiṣṭhate* : remains established, (*yadā* : when) *sarvakāmebhyaḥ* : from all desires *niḥsprhaḥ* : free from longing, *tadā* : then *yuktaḥ* : attained to spiritual communion *iti* : thus *ucyate* : is said.

18. When the disciplined mind is able to remain established in the Ātman alone, when it is free from longing for all objects of desire—then is it spoken of as having attained to spiritual communion.

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।

योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥ 19 ॥

Yathā dīpo nivāta-stho n'eṅgate s'opamā smṛtā

yogino yata-cittasya yuñjato yogam ātmanah //19//

Ātmanah : With the Ātman *yogam* : communion *yuñjataḥ* : of the one practising *yatacittasya* : with controlled mind *yoginah* : of the Yogi *nivātasthaḥ* : in a place sheltered from wind *dīpaḥ yathā* : like the flame of lamp *na iṅgate* : does not flicker, *sā* : that *upamā* : comparison *smṛtā* : is recalled.

19. The flame of a lamp sheltered from wind does not flicker. This is the comparison used to describe a Yogi's mind that is well under control and united with the Ātman.

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥ 20 ॥

*Yatr'oparamate cittam niruddham yoga-sevayā /
yatra c'aiv'ātmānā'tmānam paśyann ātmani tuṣyati* //20//

Yatra : In which *yogasevayā niruddham* : restrained by the practice of Yoga *cittam* : the movements of the Chitta *uparamate* : finds rest; *yatra ca* : wherein *ātmānā* : by the higher mind *ātmānam* : the Spirit *paśyan* : having intuited, *ātmani eva* : in the Spirit itself *tuṣyati* : rejoices.

20. That state in which the Chitta (mind stuff), with its movements restrained by the practice of Yoga, finds rest; in which is experienced the joy of the Spirit born of the higher mind intuiting the Spirit:

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्वुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।

वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥ 21 ॥

*Sukham ātyantikaṁ yat tad buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam /
vetti yatra na c'aiv'āyam sthitaś calati tattvataḥ* //21//

Yatra ca : Wherein *ayam* : he *yat* : what *atīndriyam* : beyond the ken of the senses *buddhi-grāhyam* : capable of being grasped by the purified intellect *tat* : that *ātyantikaṁ* : endless *sukham* : bliss *vetti* : experiences, (*yatra* : wherein) *sthitaḥ* : established *tattvataḥ* : from the Truth *na eva chalati* : does not waver at all.

21. In which he (the Yogin) experiences that endless bliss which is beyond the ken of the senses but is intuited by the purified intellect; wherein established, one does not waver from the Truth;

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ 22 ॥

*Yam labdhvā c'āparam lābham manyate n'ādhikaṁ tataḥ /
yasmīn sthīto na duḥkheṇa guruṇāpi vicālyate* //22//

Yam labdhvā : Having obtained which *tataḥ* : from it *aparam* : another *adhikam lābham* : as greater gain *na manyate* : does not think, *yasmin ca* : in which *sthitaḥ* : established *guruṇā* : heavy *duḥkheṇa* : by afflictions *api* : even *na vicālyate* : is not shaken;

22. Having obtained which no other gain is considered as greater; remaining in which one is not shaken even by the heaviest of afflictions,—

तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।

स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥ 23 ॥

Tam vidyād duḥkha-samyoga-viyogaṁ yoga-samjñitam /
sa niścayena yuktavyo yogo'nirviṇṇa-cetasā //23//

Duḥkha-samyoga-viyogaṁ : severance of connection with pain *tam* : that *yogasamjñitam* : what is described as Yoga *vidyāt* : let one know. *Saḥ yogaḥ* : That Yoga *niścayena* : with determination *anirviṇṇacetasā* : with untiring mind *yuktavyam* : should be practised.

23. Know that severance of connection with pain as what is designated as Yoga. It has to be practised tirelessly with determination.

संकल्पप्रभवान्कामास्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ 24 ॥

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ 25 ॥

Saṅkalpa-prabhavān kāmāns tyaktvā survān aśeṣataḥ /
manas'aiv'endriya-grāmam viniyamya samantataḥ //24//

Śanaḥ śanair uparamed buddhyā dhṛti-grhītayā /
ātma-samsthāṁ manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcid api cintayet //25//

Saṅkalpaprabhavān : Imagination-born *sarvān* : all *kāmān* : desires *aśeṣataḥ* : in completeness *tyaktvā* : abandoning, *manasā eva* :

with the mind itself *indriyagrāmaṁ* : the group of senses *saman-tataḥ* : on every side *vinīyamya* : controlling, *dhṛtigṛhīṭayā* : held with firmness *buddhyā* : by the intellect *manaḥ* : mind *ātmasaṁs-tham kṛtvā* : held firm in the Self *śanaiḥ śanaiḥ* : little by little *uparamet* : let one withdraw (become tranquil); *kiñcit api* : anything at all *na cintayet* : let one not think of.

24-25. Abandoning imagination-born longings in their entirety, restraining all the senses with the mind on every side, and setting that mind firmly on the Self under the direction of a steadfast intellect, one should practise tranquillity little by little, and abstain from every kind of thought.

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥ 26 ॥

Yato-yato niścarati manaś c'añcalam asthiram /
tatas tato niyamya'aitad ātmany eva vaśam nayet //26//

Cançalam : Wavering *asthiram* : fickle *manaḥ* : mind *yataḥ yataḥ* : from whatsoever reason *niścarati* : wanders away, *tataḥ tataḥ* : from that *etat* : this mind *niyamya* : curbing *ātmani eva* : in the Ātman alone *vaśam* : subordinate *nayet* : should bring.

26. From whatsoever reason this wavering and fickle mind wanders away, it should be curbed and brought to abide in the Self alone.

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥ 27 ॥

Prāśānta-manasaṁ hy enam yoginam sukham uttamam /
upaiti śānta-rajasaṁ brahma-bhūtam akalmaṣam //27//

Prāśāntamanasaṁ : Tranquil in mind *śāntarajasaṁ* : with passions subsided *akalmaṣam* : free from impurities *Brahmabhūtam* : Brahman-become *enam yoginam* : to this Yogin *uttamam sukham* : supreme Bliss *upaiti hi* : wells up.

27. Supreme Bliss wells up in a Yogī, who is tranquil in mind, whose passions are subdued, who is free from impurities and who is in the Brahmic state⁴.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ 28 ॥

*Yujann evam sadā'tmānam yogī vigata-kalmaṣaḥ /
sukhena brahma-saṁsparśam atyantam sukham aśnute* //28//

Evam : Thus *sadā* : always *ātmanam* : mind *yujann* : steadfast in communion *vigatakalmaṣaḥ* : with the impurities of the mind effaced *yogī* : Yogin *sukhena* : with ease *Brahmasaṁsparśam* : contact with Brahman *atyantam* : intense *sukham* : bliss *aśnute* : experiences.

28. Thus, ever engaged in making the mind steadfast in spiritual communion and having all the impurities of the mind effaced thereby, the Yogin easily experiences the intense Bliss of contact with Brahman.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ 29 ॥

*Sarva-bhūta-stham ātmānam sarva-bhūtāni c'ātmani /
īkṣate yoga-yuktātmā sarvatra samā-darśanaḥ* //29//

Sarvatra : In all beings *samadarśanaḥ* : one who sees the same *yogayuktātmā* : the man established in spiritual communion *ātmanam* : the Self *sarvabhūtastham* : residing in all things, *ātmani* : in the Self *sarvabhūtāni* : all beings *ca* : and *īkṣate* : sees.

29. The man of spiritual insight, established in same-sightedness, sees the Self as residing in all beings and all beings as resting in the Self.⁵

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ 30 ॥

Yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati /
tasy'āhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati //30//

Yah : who *sarvatra* : in all beings *mām* : Me *paśyati* : sees, *sarvaṁ* *ca* : and all *mayi* : in Me *paśyati* : sees, *tasya* : for him *aham* : I *na praṇaśyāmi* : am never lost, *saḥ ca* : and he *na me* : to me *na praṇaśyati* : is never lost.

30. He who sees Me in all beings, and all beings in Me—to him I am never lost, nor he to Me.

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ 31 ॥

Sarva-bhūta-sthitam yo mām bhajaty ekatvam āsthitaḥ /
sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate //31//

Yah : Who *ekatvam āsthitaḥ* : established in the unity of existence *sarvabhūtasthitam* : present in all beings *mām* : Me *bhajati* : serves *saḥ yogī* : that Yogin *sarvathā* : in any condition *vartamānaḥ* : remaining *api* : even *mayi* : in Me *vartate* : abides.

31. Established in the unity of all existence, a Yogin who serves Me present in all beings, verily abides in Me, whatever be his mode of life.

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ 32 ॥

Ātm'auparamyena sarvatra samam paśyati yo'rjuna /
sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham sa yogī paramo mataḥ //32//

Arjuna . O *Arjuna!* *sarvatra* : in all beings *sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham* : whether pleasure or pain (is experienced) *ātmaupamyena* : by comparison with oneself *samam* : as same *yah* : who *paśyati* : sees, *saḥ* : that *yogī* : Yogin *paramaḥ* : highest *mataḥ* : in my view.

32. O Arjuna! In My view that Yogi is the best who, out of a sense of identity with others on account of the perception of the same Atman in all, feels their joy and suffering as his own.

अर्जुन उवाच

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात् स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥ 33 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

*Yo'yam yogas tvayā proktaḥ sām्यena Madhusūdana /
etasy'āham na paśyāmi cañcalatvāt sthitiṁ sthīrām* //33//

Madhusūdana : O Slayer of Madhu! *sām्यena* : by cultivation of evenness *yaḥ* : which *ayam* : this *yogaḥ* : Yoga *tvayā* : by you *proktaḥ* : instructed, *etasya* : of this Yoga *sthīrām sthitiṁ* : firm establishment *cañcalatvāt* : due to fickleness of mind *aham* : I *nā paśyāmi* : do not see.

Arjuna said:

33. O Slayer of Madhu! Owing to the fickleness of the mind, I find no way of firm establishment in spiritual communion through equanimity as instructed by you.

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद् दृढम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ 34 ॥

*Cañcalam hi manaḥ Kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham /
tasy'āham nigrahaṁ manye vāyor iva suduṣkaram* //34//

Kṛṣṇa : O Kṛṣṇa! *hi* : verily *manaḥ* : mind *cañcalam* : restless, *pramāthi* : liable to violent agitation, *balavat* : powerful, *dṛḍham* : unyielding. *Tasya* : Of it *nigrahaṁ* : control *vāyoḥ* : of wind *iva* : like *suduṣkaram* : difficult *aham* : I *manye* : think.

34. O Kṛṣṇa! Verily, the mind is fickle, turbulent, powerful and unyielding. To control it, I think, is as difficult as controlling the wind itself.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ 35 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

Asaṁśayaṁ mahā-bāho, mano durnigrahaṁ calam

abhyāseṇa tu Kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate

||35||

Mahābāho : O mighty armed one! *manaḥ* : mind *durnigraham* : difficult to control *calam* : fickle *iti* : this *asaṁśayam* : is doubtless. *Tu* : Still *Kaunteya* : O son of Kuntī! *abhyāseṇa* : by spiritual practice *vairāgyeṇa* : by dispassion *ca* : and *grhyate* : is controlled.

The Blessed Lord said:

35. O mighty armed one! Undoubtedly the mind is fickle and difficult to be checked. Yet, O son of Kuntī, it can be brought under control by dispassion and spiritual practice.

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।

वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥ 36 ॥

Asaṁyat'ātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ /

vaśy'ātmanā tu yatatā śakyo'vāptum upāyataḥ

||36||

Asaṁyatātmanā : By one of uncontrolled mind *yogaḥ* : spiritual communion *duṣprāpaḥ* : difficult of attainment, *iti* : this *me* : My *matiḥ* : view. *Vaśyātmanā tu* : But by a man of controlled mind *upāyataḥ* : by the proper means *yatatā* : by those striving *avāptum* : to obtain *śakyaḥ* : possible.

36. My view is that Yoga is difficult of attainment by men of uncontrolled mind. But for those who have their minds under control, it is possible to attain, if they strive with the proper means.

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।
अप्राप्य योगसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥ 37 ॥

Arjuna uvāca :

*ayatiḥ śraddhayōpeto yogācchaita-mānasaḥ /
aprāpya yoga-saṁsiddhiṁ kām gatiṁ Kṛṣṇa gacchati ॥37॥*

Kṛṣṇa : O Kṛṣṇa! *śraddhayā* : with *Śraddha* or faith, *ayatiḥ* : endowed *ayatiḥ* : not steadfast in striving, *yogāt* : from the spiritual path *chaita-mānasaḥ* : having the mind distracted, *yoga-saṁsiddhiṁ* : spiritual perfection *aprāpya* : without attaining, *kām* : what *gatiṁ* : way *gacchati* : does he attain?

Arjuna said :

37. What, O Kṛṣṇa, is the fate of a man who, though endowed with firm faith, is not steadfast in his practices owing to distractions, and therefore fails to reach spiritual perfection?

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्राष्टश्चिन्माभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ 38 ॥

*Kaccin n'obhaya-vibhraṣṭas chinn'ābhram iva naśyati /
apratisthaḥ mahā-bāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pāthi ॥38॥*
Mahābāho : O mighty-armed Lord! *vimūḍhaḥ* : bewildered, *brahmaṇaḥ pāthi* : in the path to Brahman *apratisthaḥ* : not firmly established, *ubhaya-vibhraṣṭaḥ* : deprived of both *chinnābhram iva* : like a rent cloud *na naśyati kaccit* : is it not that he is destroyed?

38. O mighty-armed Lord! Bewildered in the path of Brahman, supportless, does he not lose both this world and the next? Does he not perish like a rain-cloud rent asunder?

एतस्मै संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य चेतो न ह्युपपद्यते ॥ 39 ॥

*Etan me saṁśayam Kṛṣṇa chettum arhasy aśeṣataḥ /
tvad-anyaḥ saṁśayasy'āśya chetā na hy upapadyate ॥39॥*

Kṛṣṇa : O *Kṛṣṇa*! *me* : my *etat* : this *samśayam* : doubt *aśeṣataḥ* : entirely *chettum* : to destroy *arhasi* : deserve. *Hi* : Indeed *asya* : of this *samśayasya* : doubt *chettā* : destroyer *tvadanyaḥ* : other than Thee *na upapadyate* : is fit.

39. O *Kṛṣṇa*! My doubt in this respect has yet to be cleared completely. Indeed! I find none better than Thee to be that doubt-dispeller.

श्रीमगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।

न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद् दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ 40 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

Pārtha n'aiveha n'amutra vināśas tasya vidyate /
na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścīd durgatiṁ tāta gacchati //40//

Pārtha : O son of *Prithā*! *asya* : of him *iha* : here *vināśaḥ* : destruction *na vidyate* : is not, *na amutra eva* : not in the hereafter too. *Tāta* : O dear one. *kalyāṇakṛt* : a doer of good *kaścīd* : never *durgatiṁ* : path of ruin *na gacchati* : does not go *hi* : indeed!

The Blessed Lord said:

40. O son of *Prithā*! He does not meet with downfall either here in this world or in the hereafter. Know for certain, O dear one, that one who treads the path of virtue never goes to ruin (i.e., gets an inferior birth).

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ 41 ॥

Prāpya puṇya-kṛtāṁ lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ /
śucīnāṁ śrīmatāṁ gehe yoga-bhraṣṭo'bhijāyate //41//

Yogabhraṣṭaḥ : One fallen from the path of Yoga *puṇyakṛtāṁ* : of doers of good works *lokān* : the worlds *prāpya* : having attained, *śāśvatīḥ samāḥ* : unnumbered years *uṣitvā* : staying, *śucīnām* : of the pure *śrīmatām* : of the prosperous *gehe* : in the house *abhijāyate* : is born.

41. The fallen Yogī goes (after death) to the spheres of the righteous, and after having lived there for unnumbered years, is reborn in this world in a pure and prosperous family.

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।

एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥ 42 ॥

*Athavā yoginām eva kule bhavati dhīmatām |
etadd hi durlabha-taram loke janma yad idṛśam*

||42||

Athavā : Or *yoginām* : of spiritually endowed persons *dhīmatām* : of the wise *kule* : in a family *eva* : verily *bhavati* : is born. *idṛśam* : Such *janma* : birth *yat* : which *etad* : this *loke* : in the world *durlabhataram hi* : is very rare indeed.

42. Or he is re-born in a family of men full of wisdom and spirituality. Re-birth under such conditions is passing hard to get in this world.

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।

यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥ 43 ॥

*Tatra taṁ buddhi-samyogam labhate paurvadehikam |
yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṁsiddhau Kuru-nandana*

||43||

Kurunandana : O scion of the clan of Kurus! *tatra* : there *saḥ* : he *paurvadehikam* : relating to the previous body *taṁ* : that *buddhi-samyogam* : connection with the intellect *labhate* : obtains, *tataḥ ca* : afterwards *saṁsiddhau* : for spiritual perfection *bhūyaḥ* : more *yatate* : strives.

43. There, O scion of the clan of Kurus! he will regain the spiritual discernment of his previous birth, and then he will strive harder than ever for perfection.

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।

जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥ 44 ॥

*Purv'ābhyāsenā ten'aiva hriyate hy avaśo'pi saḥ |
jijñāsura pi yogasya śabda-brahm'ativartate*

||44||

Avaśaḥ api : Even if helpless *tena* : by that *pūrvābhyāsenā* : earlier practice *eva* : verily *saḥ hriyate hi* : is verily driven on attracted. *Yogasya* : of Yoga, *jijñāsuḥ* : enquirer *api* : even *śabdabrahma* : Vedas i.e. Vedic rule of works *ativartate* : transcends.

44. Even if helpless, he will be driven towards the path of Yoga by the force of his previous striving. For even a beginner in the path of Yoga goes above the stage requiring the aid of Vedic ritualism, (not to speak then of one who has made some progress in it).

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ 45 ॥

Prayatnād yatamānas tu yogī saṁśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ /
aneka-janma-saṁsiddhas tato yāti parāṁ gatim //45//

Prayatnāt : Diligently *yatamānaḥ* : striving *yogī* : Yogī *tu* : as for *samsuddhakilbiṣaḥ* : cleansed of all his sins *anekajanmasaṁsiddhaḥ* : become perfect after passing through several births; *tataḥ* : afterwards *parāṁ gatim* : highest state (liberation) *yāti* : reaches.

45. As for the Yogi striving diligently, he is cleansed of all his sins and gains spiritual perfection after passing through several embodiments. Finally he reaches the highest state (which consists in release from the bondage of the body).

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।

कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगो भवार्जुन ॥ 46 ॥

Tapasvibhyo'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikaḥ /
karmibhyaś c'ādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhav'ārjuna //46//

Yogī : Yogī *tapasvibhyaḥ* : than those practising austerities *adhikaḥ* : greater. *jñānibhyaḥ api adhikaḥ* : greater than the man of knowledge i.e. a scholar also; *yogī* : Yogī *karmibhyaḥ ca* : greater than a ritualist. *Tasmāt* : Therefore *Arjuna* : O Arjuna *Yogī bhava* : become a Yogī.

46. A Yogī (one practising meditation) is superior to a man of austerity; he is superior to a scholar; he is superior to a ritualist too. Therefore, O Arjuna, be you a Yogī.⁶

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तर्गतमह
ब्रह्मैवात्म्यं शरीरात् । योगिनां तत्त्वज्ञानं ॥ ४६ ॥

ब्रह्मैवात्म्यं शरीरात् । योगिनां तत्त्वज्ञानं ॥ ४६ ॥

*Yoginām api sarveṣāṃ mad-gaten' āntar'ātmanā
braddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamō matah* ॥ 47 ॥

Yah : who madgatena : entered into My being antarātmanā : with the inner self, braddhāvan : endowed with faith mām : Me bhajate : worships, saḥ : he sarveṣāṃ api : of all yoginām : Yogins, yuktatamah : most well established in spiritual communion me : My matah : view.

47. Of all the Yogins, he is the most attuned in spiritual communion, who worships Me with abiding faith and with his innermost self fused with Me.⁷

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मसिद्धान्तो
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे आत्मसंयमयोगो

योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे आत्मसंयमयोगो

नाम षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥ ६ ॥

नाम षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥ ६ ॥

NOTES

1. V.2: The point is that abandonment of self-centred values is the common discipline to be observed by both the Sannyasin and the Yogī. Mere abandonment of all actions externally will take one nowhere; for self-centredness remains unless it is eliminated by some means. It is true too that much involvement in unnecessary works, done without any discrimination or reflection, will only increase desires and further strengthen self-centredness. But discharge of one's Svadharma, as an offering to God, and eliminating self-centredness in so discharging it through practice of discrimina-

tion and devotion, will gradually make one rise above self-centredness.

2. *V.3*: The two stages of spiritual life are pointed out here—that of the *Āruruṅṣu* (one desiring to ascend) and that of the *Ārūḍha* (one who has ascended to Yoga). In the first stage dedicated works or discharge of *Svadharmā* as an offering to the Divine is the means of higher evolution, whereas in the second stage introspective quiescence (*Śama*) becomes the means of perfection. This does not mean that every one of that type need withdraw from all action and become a recluse. For, as given in verse 56 of the previous chapter, it is said of such persons: “Even though he may be engaged in all kinds of work, such a person, being completely given over to Me, attains to the eternal and undecaying state.” It shows that though work is no longer a discipline for further progress for such an ‘*ārūḍha*’, he can engage himself in God-centred action. This way of life was preached by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and it is known as the *Bhāgavata Dharma*. It is amplified in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* under nine heads—*śravaṇam* (hearing) *kīrtanam* (hymning), *smaraṇam* (remembering), *pādasevanam* (service), *arcanam* (worship), *vandanam* (salutation), *dāsyam* (servitude), *sakhyam* (comradeship), *ātmanivedanam* (total surrender). Here under *pādasevanam*, works of service are included; because the manifested world is a ‘*pāda*’ or part of the Lord. Its service implies a God-centred life. Thus *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* are self-contained paths. They may look separate at a certain stage, but they end in the same state of spiritual integration. One need not be merely considered as a feeder to the other.

3. *Vrs. 5-6*: These verses seem to imply that there are two aspects to the Self of man—one higher and the other lower. The higher self is the *Buddhi* turned towards the *Ātman*, the spiritual essence. The lower self is the mind dominated by the senses. It is said the sense-dominated mind should not be allowed to overpower the *Buddhi*, the higher self. If this is to be avoided, the *Buddhi* should draw strength from the *Ātman* by communion with it. Such a *Buddhi*, fortified by the *Ātman* consciousness, can easily uplift the sense-bound mind and integrate it with itself.

4. *Vrs. 27-28*: The word *Brahmabhūta* cannot have been used here in the sense of ‘one having become one with the Supreme

Being (Brahman); for immediately following in the Verse 28 is mentioned *Brahma-saṁsparśa*—contact with Brahman, where the Yogi's distinction from Brahman should necessarily be still retained. It is one who is *Brahma-bhūta* that gains *Brahma-saṁsparśa*. *Brahma-bhūta* must therefore mean that state of unruffled inward consciousness which precedes the dawn of supreme devotion and enlightenment (cf. ch. 18-54) and which is described at the end of the second chapter as *Brāhmisthiti*. The word Brahman is used in different meanings in different contexts in the Gita, as has been shown in these notes from place to place. For a detailed discussion see note 6 in Chapter 14 and 9 in 18. Here that state is described as *śānta-rajasam*, as one free from passions, and *akalmaṣam*, free from impurities.

5. *Vrs. 29-32*: These verses are of considerable metaphysical, ethical and psychological importance. These are: (1) Metaphysically it asserts the unity of all existence in a spiritual Self, which is both impersonal and personal, and emphasises the intimate relation between that Spiritual Self and the individual self. For in Verse 29 the Yogī is said to see the Self in all and all in this Self. In the very next verse, 'I, the Supreme Lord,' is substituted in place of Self, thus indicating the basic unity of both. (2) Ethically it teaches the most universal principle of ethics. To do towards, and feel for, others' selves as for one's own self, is the highest principle of ethics. This is the implication of seeing the Self in all and all in the Self. (3) Psychologically it shows that spiritual intuition which Yoga gives has a distinct content of a unique nature and is not a mere fantasy without any life-enhancing value. The new contents of consciousness are: (a) establishment in an unabating state of bliss from which even the greatest sorrow cannot shake one (cf V. 21-23 and V. 28 of this chapter). (b) Self-centredness goes away when one finds the same Self in all. It thus leads to an all-comprehending extension of the subjective side of consciousness, which now dominates the objective side just as the substantiality of a tree subordinates that of its shadow. A Universal Self becomes a matter of experience.

6. *V. 46*: This verse at first appears a little enigmatic, especially so when one takes the words denoting the different disciplines in their usual sense. For example the Yogī is said to be superior to a

Jñāni, a knowing one, while the Advaita commentators uncompromisingly state that *Jñāna* is the last word in spiritual life and all the other Yogas are only stepping stones to it. To save *Jñāna* from this eclipse by Yoga, *Jñāna* here has to be arbitrarily interpreted as scholarship, intellectual understanding, as against Yoga which is intuitive realization. Or *Jñāna* may be the discriminative knowledge enabling the Spirit to be distinguished from matter and not the unitary consciousness of Advaita. Even then this one verse is enough to disprove the Advaitic contention of exalting *Jñāna* Yoga to a position of supremacy and hegemony, and the other Yogas of Bhakti, Karma and Yoga to the position of mere vassal disciplines. The Gīta text however does not do so. All Yogas are equally valid and are independent paths to the Supreme. Independence does not mean the exclusion of other disciplines. Man is an integrated whole, his mind being a complex of feeling (emotion), will and intellection. In the four spiritual disciplines, one of these dominates, while the others, though subordinate, complete the discipline. This is the integrated Yoga of the Gīta. Swami Vivekananda too has interpreted Vedanta in this way, giving equal place to all the four Yogas.

7. V.47: This verse, immediately following the praise of Yoga, tells us that devotion to God, which makes one cling to the Lord in utter faith and self-surrender, makes Yoga all the more exalted. The word Yoga, like Brahman, is used in many senses in the Gīta. Here in this chapter the word is used mainly in the sense of *Aṣṭāṅga-yoga*—the eight-limbed Yoga of Patanjali. It is the science of concentration and stilling of the modes of the mind. The philosophy with which it supports its practices is the *Sāṃkhya*, which teaches the discrimination between the Puruṣa and Prakṛti, and establishment in the knowledge that the Puruṣa, the Spirit, is entirely different from Prakṛti or Material Nature. There is not much of a place for God and devotion in it. But the Gītā everywhere stresses the supreme importance of *Iśvara* and devotion to Him in making all spiritual disciplines complete. So it is pointed out here that the Yoga discipline of concentration will be more perfect if the object of concentration is the Lord.

Just as the Lord exalts *Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga* here, he exalts Karma Yoga in verses 8-12 of Chapter 12, and says that total surrender

of the fruits of action leads to peace at once. But here also Karma is coupled with devotion to Īvara. But, just as concentration is the form that Yōga should take in Aṣṭāṅga-yoga, in Karma Yōga, work for the Lord is the form that spiritual discipline takes. Thus the Gītā does not downgrade any of these disciplines as the handmaid of Jñāna, or for the matter of that, even of Bhakti. It wants that in each Yōga, its specific discipline must have the dominant place, but that it should also integrate into itself the essential contributions of the others also. If it tilts towards any of the Yogas, it is towards Bhakti, with the other Yogas integrated into it.

Chapter VII

ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगः

COMMUNION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND REALIZATION

SUMMARY

The Lower and Higher Prakṛtis: (1-6) The Lord speaks to Arjuna about Divine knowledge thus: Among men there are only a few who aspire and strive to know Me, and even from among them, only a few succeed after many births. I have two powers of manifestation (Prakṛtis), the lower and the higher. The lower Prakṛti is material Nature consisting of earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, intellect and egoity. The higher Prakṛti is My manifestation as Jīvas or centres of consciousness. The former is My Unconscious Nature and the latter Conscious Nature. It is my Conscious Nature that supports and sustains the world made of the latter Unconscious Nature, because the evolution of into various spheres and numerous species of beings is for Jīvas to reap the fruits of their Karma and gradually evolve into perfection.

The All-embracing Divine: (7-11) There is none higher than Me, or outside My being, limiting Me. As a string supports all the beads in a necklace, so are all things sustained by Me. My immanent Self is the Essence in all entities, manifesting as their characteristic nature and function—in water as taste, in earth as smell, in fire as heat, in all beings as life, in the thoughtful as intellect, in the strong as their strength, in embodied beings as desire conducive to growth and so on.

Who transcends Māyā: The four types of Devotees: (12-19) All beings high and low have originated from Me and are con-

tained in Me, but they do not limit me. No being subject to My Māyā constituted of the three Guṇas, can know Me, the immanent yet transcendent Being. For, this Māyā that obstructs their vision is My power, and only by surrendering to Me with one's whole being can one get across its obstruction and know Me. But so long as man is dominated by evil tendencies and is a slave of demoniac nature, he does not devote himself to Me. Four types of persons become devoted to Me—the sufferer, the enquirer, the boon-seeker and the knowing one. Though they are all to be considered noble and virtuous, the knowing one is to Me like My very self. His love stems from his sense of innate unity with Me, and is therefore unmotivated and constant. To him I am dearer than anything else, and so is he to Me. It is only after many births of spiritual striving that man is established in this form of love based on the knowledge that it is Vāsudeva alone who is seen as this world of multiplicity.

The One God forms the object of all worship: (20-30) In whatever aspect devotees adore Me, I strengthen their faith in that aspect and approach them in that form. To those who worship Me in the form of various deities for attaining worldly fulfilments, I, who indwell these deities, strengthen their faith in their objects of worship and grant them their prayer; but they only attain to those deities, and the fruit they get is of short duration. Not understanding Me as the Universal Being, indwelling even the deities, they adore particularised and limited deities. Due to the obstruction of My Yoga-māyā, men do not understand Me as the unborn and the undecaying. I know all beings, past, present and future, but none knows Me. For their body-consciousness and passions based on it, obstruct men's understanding from the very start. It is only those whose sinful tendencies have been counteracted by good works, that worship Me with steadfastness of mind. Those who thus worship Me for liberation from the cycle of births and deaths, come to know that I am the sole existence, as also the sole doer and the sole enjoyer.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युज्जन्मदाश्रयः ।

असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ह्यास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥ 1 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

*Mayy āsakta-manāḥ Pārtha yogam yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ |
asamśayaṁ samagram mām yathā jñāsyasi tac chṛṇu ||1||*

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! mayi : in Me āsaktamanāḥ : mind absorbed in love madāśrayaḥ : resigned to Me yogam communion yuñjan : practising, yathā : how mām : Me samagram : in fullness asamśayam : without doubt jñāsyasi : know, tat : that śṛṇu : hear.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Hear now, O son of Pṛthā, how one resigned to Me and absorbed in love of Me, attains to full knowledge of Me through the practice of spiritual communion.¹

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ 2 ॥

*Jñānam te'ham savijñānam idam vakṣyāmy aśeṣataḥ |
yaj jñātvā n'eha bhūyo'nyaj jñātavyam avaśiṣyate .||2||*

Yat : What jñātvā : having known iha : here bhūyaḥ : more anyat : other things jñātavyam : that which has to be understood na avaśiṣyate : remains not, idam : this jñānam : Knowledge savijñānam : along with special Knowledge of it aśeṣataḥ : in fullness aham : I te : to you vakṣyāmi : shall tell.

2. I shall now declare to you in fullness that Knowledge along with Special Knowledge (its higher development), by means of which there will remain nothing more for you to understand.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ 3 ॥

*Manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu kaścid yatati siddhaye |
yatatām api siddhānāṁ kaścin mām veti tattvataḥ ||3||*

Manuṣyaṇāṃ sahasreṣu : Among thousands of men *kaścit* : some one *siddhaye* : for spiritual perfection *yatati* : strives; *yatatām siddhānām* : of the striving aspirants *api* : even *kaścit* : some one *mām* : Me *tattvataḥ* : in truth *vetti* : knows.

3. Among thousands of men, there will just be one here or there striving for spiritual perfection. From among the aspirants so striving, one perchance knows Me in truth.

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।

अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ 4 ॥

Bhūmir āpo'nalo vāyuh kham mano buddhir eva ca /

ahamkāra itīyam me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā //4//

Bhūmiḥ : Earth, *āpaḥ* : water, *analaḥ* : fire, *vāyuh* : air, *kham* : sky, *manaḥ* : mind, *buddhiḥ* : understanding, *ahamkāraḥ* : I-sense or egoism *ca* : and *iti* : thus *aṣṭadhā* : into eight *bhinnā eva* : divided *me* : My. *iyam* : this *prakṛtiḥ* : Nature.

4. My Nature is divided into eight categories—earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, understanding, and I-sense.

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥ 5 ॥

Apar'eyam itas tv anyām prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām /

jīva-bhūtām mahā-bāho yay'edaṁ dhāryate jagat //5//

Mahābāho : O mighty-armed! *iyam* : this *aparā* : lower; *itaḥ tu* : from this *anyām* : different *jīva-bhūtām* : that which has manifested as the Jīva (the self-conscious individual centre) *yayā* : by which *idam* : this *jagat* : universe *dhāryate* : is sustained, *tām* : that *me* : My *parām* : higher *prakṛtim* : nature *viddhi* : know.

5. This, O mighty armed, is My lower nature. Know that, as different from it, is My higher nature forming the source of all Jivas and the support of the whole universe.

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।

अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥ 6 ॥

Etad-yonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇi'ty upadhāraya /
aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā. //6//

Sarvāṇi : All *bhūtāni* : beings *etad yonīni* : as entities having these two as their source, *iti* : thus *upadhāraya* : know. *Aham* : I *kṛtsnasya* : of the entire *jagataḥ* : universe *prabhavaḥ* : the origin. *tathā* : likewise *pralayaḥ* : the dissolution.

6. Know that all beings have these two natures of Mine as their source. I am the origin and the dissolution of this entire universe.

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति घनंजय ।

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ 7 ॥

Mattaḥ parataram n'ānyat kiṁcid asti Dhanamjaya /
mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva //7//

Dhanamjaya : O Arjuna! *mattaḥ* : than Me *parataram* : higher *anyat* : other *kiṁcid* : any one *na asti* : does not exist. *Sūtre* : in a thread *maṇigaṇāḥ* : gems *iva* : like *mayi* : in Me *idaṁ* : this *sarvam* : all *protam* : strung.

7. O Arjuna! There is no being higher than Me. As a row of pearls threaded on a string, all the worlds are held on Me.

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रमास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ 8 ॥

Raso'ham apsu Kaunteya paabhā'smi śaśi-sūryayor /
praṇavaḥ sarva-vedeṣu śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṁ nṛṣu //8//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *apsu* : in water *rasaḥ* : taste *aham* : I, *śaśisūryayor* : of the moon and the sun *prabhā* : brilliance *asmī* : I am, *sarvavedeṣu* : in all Vedas *praṇavaḥ* : Praṇava (the

sound symbol Om), *khe* : in sky *śabdaḥ* : sound, *nṛṣu* : in men *pauruṣam* : manliness.

8. O son of Kuntī! In water I am taste; in sun and moon, their brilliance; in all the Vedas, the sound symbol Om; in the sky-element, sound; and in men, their manliness.

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।

जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ 9 ॥

Puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca tejaś c'āsmi vibhāvasau /
jīvanam sarva-bhūteṣu tapaś c'āsmi tapasviṣu //9//

Pṛthivyām : In the earth element *puṇyaḥ gandhaḥ* sweet fragrance *ca* : and, *vibhāvasau* : in fire *tejaḥ* : light *ca* : and *asmi* : I am, *sarvabhūteṣu* : in all beings *jīvanam* life-principle, *tapasviṣu* : in austere men *tapaḥ* : austerity *ca* : too *asmi* : am.

9. In the earth element I am sweet fragrance; in fire I am brilliance; in living beings I am the life-principle; and in austere men, I am austerity.

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।

बुद्धिबुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ 10 ॥

Bījam mām sarva-bhūtānām viddhi Pārtha sanātanam /
buddhir buddhimatām asmi tejaś tejasvinām aham //10//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *mām* : Me *sarvabhūtānām* : of all beings *sanātanam* : eternal *bījam* : seed *viddhi* : know. *Buddhimatām* : Of the intelligent *buddhiḥ* : intelligence, *tejasvinām* : of puissant men *tejaḥ* : puissance *aham* : I *asmi* : am.

10. Know me, O Pārtha! to be the eternal seed of all beings. In the wise I am their wisdom, and in puissant men their prowess.

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ।
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ 11 ॥

Balaṁ balavatām asmi kāma-rāga-vivarjitam /
dharm'āviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo'smi Bharata' rṣabha //11//

Balavatām : In the strong *kāma-rāga-vivarjitam* : free from lust and attachment *balam* : strength *asmi* : I am, *bhūteṣu* : in living beings *dharmāviruddhaḥ* : not opposed to virtue *kāmaḥ* : desire *asmi* : I am.

11. In the strong I am strength uncorrupted by desire and attachment, and in living beings I am desire not contrary to virtue.

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ 12 ॥

Ye c'aiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasās tāmasāś ca ye /
matta ev'eti tān viddhi na tv ahaṁ teṣu te mayi //12//

Ye ca : And whatever *sāttvikāḥ* : characterised by Sattva *rājasāḥ* : characterised by Rajas *ye* : whatever *tāmasāḥ* : characterised by Tamas *ca* : and *bhāvāḥ* : manifestations, *tān* : them *mattaḥ* : from Me *eva* : verily *viddhi* : know. *Ahaṁ* : I *tu* : but *teṣu* : in them *na* : not, *te* : they *mayi* : in Me.

12. Whatever manifestations there are of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, they have all come from Me. They are in Me, not I in them.²

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ 13 ॥

Tribhir guṇamayair bhāvair ebhiḥ sarvam idaṁ jagat /
mohitam n'ābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam //13//

Ebhiḥ : By these *tribhiḥ* : by three *guṇamayaiḥ* : formed of Guṇas *bhāvaiḥ* : mental states *sarvam* : all *idaṁ* : this *jagat* : world

mohitam : deluded, *ebhyaḥ param* : superior to them *avyayam* : imperishable *mām* : Me *na* : not *abhijānāti* : knows.

13. Deluded by the mental states accruing from the three Guṇas of Prakṛti, this world knows not Me, the Imperishable, transcending these Guṇas.

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ 14 ॥

Daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā /

mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etaṁ taranti te

//14//

Guṇamayī : Constituted of Guṇas *daivī* : divine *mama* : My *eṣā* : this *māyā* : *Māyā duratyayā* *hi* : difficult to overcome. *Ye* : Who *mām* : Me *eva* : only *prapadyante* : take refuge in *te* : they *etām* : this *māyām* : *Māyā taranti* : overcome.

14. My divine *Māyā* (power) constituted of the three Guṇas is difficult to overcome. Whoever takes refuge in Me alone, in utter devotion, overcomes it.

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।

माययापहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥ 15 ॥

Na mān duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante nur'ādhamāḥ /

māyayā pahṛta-jñānā āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ

//15//

Āsuram : Demoniatic *bhāvam* : disposition, nature *āśritāḥ* : partaking of, *māyayā* : by *Māyā apahṛtajñānāḥ* : deprived of right understanding *duṣkṛtinaḥ* : the evil doers *mūḍhāḥ* : the foolish *narādhamāḥ* : lowest of men *mām* : Me *na prapadyante* : never seek refuge in.

15. The lowest type of men, evil, foolish and demoniac in nature, being deprived of right understanding by *Māyā*, never take refuge in Me with devotion.³

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ 16 ॥

Catur-vidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukr̥tino'rjuna /
ārto jijñāsur arth'āarthī jñānī ca bharata'rṣabha //16//

Bharatarṣabha : O greatest of the Bharatas! *Arjuna* : O Arjuna!
caturvidhāḥ : four types *sukr̥tinaḥ janāḥ* : pious men *mām* : Me
bhajante : worship, *ārtaḥ* : the distressed *jijñāsur* : the enquirer
arthārthī : wealth-seeker *jñānī* : knower *ca* : and.

16. O Arjuna, the greatest of the Bharata race! Four kinds of pious men adore Me. They are the distressed one, the Knowledge-seeker, the wealth-seeker, and the knower.

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ 17 ॥

Teṣāṁ jñānī nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir viśiṣyate /
priyo hi jñānino'tyartham aham sa ca mama priyaḥ //17//

Teṣam : Among them *nityayuktaḥ* : ever communing *ekabhaktiḥ* : single-minded in devotion *jñānī* : knower *viśiṣyate* : is the best.
Aham : I *jñāninaḥ* : of the knower *atyartham priyaḥ* : extremely dear *hi* : verily *saḥ* : he *ca* : and *mama* : My *priyaḥ* : dear.

17. Among them, the knower (or the man of wisdom), ever-communing and single-minded in devotion, is the best. I am indeed supremely dear to such a knower, and he in turn is dear to Me.

उद्धाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥ 18 ॥

Uddārāḥ sarva ev'aite jñānī tv ātm'aiva me matam /
āsthitaḥ sa hi yukt'ātmā mām ev'ānuttamām gatim //18//

Ete sarve : All these *uddārāḥ eva* : are noble certainly, *jñānī* : knower *tu* : but *ātmā eva* : self itself *me* : My *matam* : view *hi* :

indeed. *Saḥ* : He *yuktātmā* : ever in union with Me *mām eva* : Me alone *anuttamām* : the highest *gatim* : goal *āsthitaḥ* : established (in the conviction).

18. While all of them are certainly noble, the knower I cherish as My very self—such is My view. For, ever in union with Me, he is established in the conviction that I am his highest goal.⁴

बहुनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ 19 ॥

Bahūnāṁ janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate /
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ //19//

Bahūnām : Of many *janmanām* : births *ante* : at the end of *jñānavān* : the knowing one *vāsudevaḥ* : Vāsudeva *sarvam* : everything *iti* : thus *mām* : Me *prapadyate* : seeks refuge in. *Saḥ* : That *mahātmā* : great soul *sudurlabhaḥ* : very rare.

19. At the end of many births (of striving), the knowing one makes Me his refuge, realising that Vāsudeva is All. A great soul of that type is rare to find.

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृताज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।

तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ 20 ॥

Kāmais tais-tair hṛta-jñānāḥ prapadyante' nya-devatāḥ /
taṁ-taṁ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā //20//

Svayā : By one's own *prakṛtyā* : by nature *niyatāḥ* : directed, *taḥ taḥ kāmāḥ* : by this and that desire *hṛtajñānāḥ* : deprived of judgement *taṁ taṁ niyamam* : ways of worship pertaining to each *āsthāya* : adopting *anyadevatāḥ* : other deities *prapadyante* : worship.

20. Influenced by their inherent nature and deprived of correct judgement by numerous desires, people adore other deities with various forms of worship pertaining to them.⁵

यो यो यां यां तनं सक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचारां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ 21 ॥

Yo ye yām yām tanam bhaktaḥ śraddhayārcitum icchati |
tasya-tasya'ācalām śraddhām tām eva vidadhāmy aham //21//

Yāḥ Yāḥ bhaktaḥ : Whichever devotee *yām yām tanum* : whatever form or aspect *śraddhayā* : with faith *arcitum* : to worship *icchati* : desires, *tasya-tasya* : of each of these votaries *tām* : that *śraddhām* : faith *eva* : verily *aham* : I *acalām* : unshakable *vidadhāmi* : render.

21. Whichever devotee desires to adore whatever such aspect with faith, in all such votaries I make that particular faith unshakable.

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विदितान् हि तान् ॥ 22 ॥

Sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasy'ārāadhanam ihate |
labhate ca tataḥ kāmān may'aiva vihitān hi tān //22//

Saḥ : He *tayā* : with that *śraddhayā* faith *yuktaḥ* : endowed with, *tasya* : of that deity *ārāadhanam* : worship *ihate* : performs. *Tataḥ* : Consequently *mayā* : by Me *vihitān* : granted *eva* : alone *tān* : those *kāmān* : objects of desire *labhate ca hi* : obtains verily.

22. Endowed with that faith, a votary performs the worship of that particular deity and obtains the fruits thereof, these being granted by Me alone.

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पाभ्युपमेयसाम् ।
देवान्येव यजो यांति मद्भक्ता यांति मामपि ॥ 23 ॥

Antavat tu phalam teṣāṁ tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām |
devān deva-yajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api //23//

Alpamedhasām : Of little minds *teṣāṁ* : of them *tat* : that *phalam* : result *antavat tu* : finite only *bhavati* : is. *Devayajāḥ* : Those who.

worship the Devas *devān* : Devas *yānti* : attain, *mad-bhaktāḥ api* : but My devotees *mām* : Me *yānti* : attain.

23. The results accruing to such small-minded people are finite only. Those who worship the Devas go to the Devas, but My devotees attain to Me.

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ 24 ॥

Avyaktam vyaktim āpannam manyante mām abuddhayaḥ /
param bhāvam ajānanto mamāvyayam anuttamam //24//

Avyayam : Immutable *anuttamam* : unique *mama* : My *param-bhāvam* : transcendental being *ajānantaḥ* : without knowing *abuddhayaḥ* : men of little intelligence *avyaktam* : unclear or unmanifested state *vyaktim* : individuality *āpannam* : come to possess *manyante* : think.

24. Without any insight into My transcendental nature, unique and immutable, men of little understanding look upon Me as a mere human individual, having come into manifestation from an unmanifested state.⁶

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ 25 ॥

N'āhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā samāvṛtaḥ /
mūḍho' yaṁ n'ābhijānāti loko mām ajam avyayam //25//

Yogamāyāsamāvṛtaḥ : Veiled by My divine power *aham* : I *sarvasya* : to all *na prakāśaḥ* : not revealed. *Mūḍhaḥ* : deluded *ayaṁ lokaḥ* : this world *mām* : Me *ajam* : the unoriginated *avyayam* : the indestructible *na abhijānāti* : does not know.

25. Veiled as I am in My Yogamāyā (Divine Power), I am not revealed to all. This deluded world does not know Me, the unoriginated and the indestructible.⁷

वेदाहं समीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।

भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥ 26 ॥

*Ved'āhaṁ samatītāni vartamānāni c'ārjuna
bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni mām tu veda na kaścana*

||26||

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *samatītāni* : the past *vartamānāni* : the present *ca* : and *bhaviṣyāṇi* : future *ca* : and *bhūtāni* : beings *aham veda* : I know, *mām tu* : but Me *kaścana* : any one *na veda* : does not know.

26. O Arjuna! I know all beings—past, present and future. But none knows me.

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।

सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्गे यान्ति परंतप ॥ 27 ॥

*Ichhā-dveṣa-samutthena dvandva-mohena Bhārata /
sarva-bhūtāni sammohaṁ sarge yānti paramtapa*

||27||

Bhārata : O scion of Bhārata's house *paramtapa* : O destroyer of enemies *sarge* : from birth *icchā-dveṣa samutthena* : springing from instinctive attractions and aversions *dvandva mohena* : by the bewitchment of opposites *sarvabhūtāni* : all beings *sammoham* : state of delusion *yānti* : attain.

27. O scion of Bharata's house! From their very birth all beings are deluded by the bewitchment of the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, sprung from the instinctive feelings of attraction and aversion for them.

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।

ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां ददवताः ॥ 28 ॥

*Yeṣāṁ tv anta-gataṁ pāpaṁ janānāṁ puṇya-karmaṇām /
te dvandva-moha-nirmukta bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ* ||28||

Puṇyakarmaṇām : Doers of virtuous deeds *yeṣām* : whose *janānām* : of persons *pāpaṁ* : sin *anta-gataṁ* : come to an end *tu* : but, *te* : they *dvandva-mohanirmuktāḥ* : freed from the bewilderment of the

pairs of opposites *dṛḍhavrataḥ* : steadfast in their vows *mām* : Me *bhajante* : adore.

28. But those men of virtuous deeds, in whom sinfulness has been effaced—they, freed from the bewilderment of sense life, worship Me with great steadfastness in their vows.

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।

ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ 29 ॥

Jarā-maraṇa-mokṣāya mām āśritva yatanti ye |

te brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnam adhyātmam karma c'ākhilam ||29||

Jarāmarāṇa-mokṣāya : For freedom from old age and death *ye* : whoever *mām* : Me *āśritva* : depending *yatanti* : strive, *te* : they *tat* : that *Brahma* : Brahman or the Absolute *Kṛtsnam* : entire *adhyātmam* : spirit in manifestation *ākhilam* : whole of *karma* : work *ca* : and *viduḥ* : know.

29. Those that strive for liberation from the travails of old age and death in complete trust and dependence on Me, shall know all about the Absolute, His spiritual manifestation and His works of spiritual import.⁸

साविभूताश्रित्यैवं मां साधियन् च ये विदुः ।

प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसाः ॥ 30 ॥

Sādhibhūt'ādḥidaivam mām sādhiyajñam ca ye viduḥ |

prayāṇa-kāle'pi ca mām te vidur yukta-cetasah ||30||

Mām : Me *sādhibhūt'ādḥidaivam* : as underlying all material manifestations and all divinities *sādhiyajñam* : as underlying all sacrifices *ca* : and *ye* : who *viduḥ* : know, *te* : they *yuktacetasah* : with the mind absorbed in Me *prayāṇakāle* : at the time of death *api ca* : even *mām* : Me *viduḥ* : know.

30. Those who have grasped that I am the spiritual power that sustains all material manifestations, all divine expressions

and all spiritual endeavours—they continue to know Me as such even at the time of death, their mind being ever absorbed in Me.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगो
नाम सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥ ७ ॥

NOTES

1. *Vrs.* 1-6: These verses set forth that in the creative process the Lord's power of manifestation functions as His two Natures—the material i.e. unconscious Nature or Prakṛti, and His spiritual Nature or the Jīvas. Strangely enough the Jīva, which should be called Puruṣa, is classified with Prakṛti here, thereby obliterating the dichotomy between the two terms familiar in the Sāṃkhya.

The material Nature is here treated in its cosmic aspect and is spoken of as eightfold. But that is done by counting only the effect categories and leaving the causal categories as implied. Fully stated, according to the analysis of the Sāṃkhya philosophy, the categories of Prakṛti and its evolutes are twenty four. These are: Prakṛti (with its three Guṇas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas); Mahattattva; Ahankāra; Manas; the five organs of knowledge; the five organs of action; the five Tanmatras; and the five gross elements of Sky, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. From these categories the material universe is evolved. Also the psycho-physical organism of the Jīva, consisting of his subtle and gross bodies, evolves out of these. The subtle body persists through all embodiments, until the Jīva gains liberation, attaining to his natural state as Puruṣa. This material Nature or Prakṛti is infinite with countless dimensions in which different world systems (Lokas) of different subtlety co-exist without mutual intrusion and the Jīva finds embodiment in these different Lokas according to his Karma.

The material Nature is called by the Lord here as his *Aparā Prakṛti* or Lower Nature. In contrast to this He speaks of his *Parā Prakṛti* or higher Nature as 'what has become the *Jīva*' (*Jīva-bhūtam*). Both Natures have their origin and dissolution in Him. Origin and dissolution here means the relative beginning and dissolution at the beginning and end of the *Kalpa* or cycle of time. As creation and dissolution constitute a cyclic process, there is no absolute beginning for both these manifestations of His Powers. As His *Prakṛti* or Nature, they are one with Him just as light and heat are one with fire, though they are attributively distinguishable from fire. Ontologically they are distinct from, and dependent on, Him but not different at the same time. For absolute dependence pre-supposes a basic unity.

Creation as taught in Chapter 8.17-20 is an eternal process. So the *Parā* and *Aparā Prakṛtis* of the Lord are eternally expressing as the cyclic process of time consisting in *Kalpa* or a period of manifestation, and *Pralaya* or a period of dissolution. They come into being through a process of evolution, and dissolve into the original state through a process of involution. This alternation goes on eternally.

The *Parā Prakṛti* or *Jīva* in its collectivity is thus involved in this eternal process, but with a difference. A *Jīva*, a unit of this *Prakṛti*, undergoes evolution in this creative process and ultimately manifests the fullness of his divine nature. For a *Jīva* is described in 15.7 by the Lord thus: "An *Amśa* (a fraction or particle of His) has become the *Jīvā* in the universe" Elsewhere in the *Upaniṣads* he is described as a spark of the Divine Fire. So he has got all the potentialities of *Īśvara*, as *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ānanda*. But this Divine nature is hidden or contracted in the state of ignorance. The process of creation and dissolution is sometimes described as a Play or *līla* of the Lord as there is no purpose for the Lord to gain through it. But from the point of view of the *Jīva* it has a purpose, and that purpose is to help the *Jīva* regain his full divine nature, overcoming the domination of material Nature in the state of ignorance. *Karmas*, good and bad, accrue to the *Jīva* in the course of the creative process, giving him different embodiments, until he attains illumination through Divine grace. Then the *Jīva*, the individual unit of *Parā Prakṛti*, is freed from the thralldom of matter and involvement in the cycle of births and

deaths. According to pure monistic doctrine the Jīva is then dissolved in Brahman and becomes one with Him as a drop of water in the ocean. According to theistic Vedānta, or qualified monism, the Jīva continues to have his identity even in Mukti, but participates in the spiritual excellences of the Lord and continues in deathless and blissful service of Him.

Though individual Jīvas attain salvation and go out of Saṁsāra, the Jīva-Sakti (higher Nature) in its collectivity functions eternally like the Aparā-Sakti (lower Nature). For, the number of Jīvas are infinite, and those in a state of contraction and abeyance are always evolving into greater and greater perfection. Now the Parā or Jīva-Sakti is here spoken of as that which sustains the universe (*dhāryate jagat*). Generally we say that the Lord supports the universe, but here this is said to be done by the collectivity of Jīvas. The idea here is that it is the presence of countless Jīvas that necessitates the eternal cyclic process of Time to revolve, initiating Kalpas and Pralayas. For the Karmas of the Jīvas come to fruition in the process of Time, and they have to reap their rewards, which requires embodiment. Embodiment of Jīvas requires the evolution of the various world systems. Thus the Jīva is, in this sense, the cause of the creative process and is therefore spoken of as the sustaining force of the universe. In terms of the Paurāṇika ideology, the Jīva is therefore described as the *hetu*, the cause of the creative process. Thus in this sense the creative process has a purpose, as far as the Jīva is concerned. That purpose is the Jīva's evolution—evolution leading to perfection. But the Lord Himself has no extraneous purpose in creation, and so it is said to be His Līla or play.

This perception of the whole creative process as a divine play in which the Lord Himself becomes the Jīva, the Jāgat (world) and their master—(the playmates, the play things and the player)—is the Vijñāna, or the special knowledge spoken of here in verse two. This is in agreement with Sri Ramakrishna's teaching on the Vijñāni.

As contrasted with Vijñāna, Jñāna is simple knowledge. It is not mere knowledge of scriptures, but illumination in a general sense which gives the understanding that God is the reality and the multiplicity is a mere appearance, a false presentation to be rejected.

One having mere Jñāna does not understand that it is a manifestation of His Śakti, which is one with Him but through which He can project multiplicity without Himself being affected by it. The Vijñāni is one who has this higher illumination and therefore knows the creative process and the evolution of multiplicity as the Play of the Lord—a play in the sense that it has no ulterior purpose and is only an expression of His inherent Bliss. Sri Ramakrishna has expounded this doctrine of the Vijñāni in his teachings. The distinction that the Gītā draws here between Jñāna and Vijñāna can be understood only in the light of this teaching. The interpretation that the former, i.e., Jñāna, means knowledge of scriptures, and the latter, namely Vijñāna, is experience, is inadequate.

2. *Vrs.12-14*: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, the three constituents or Guṇas of Prakṛti, are clearly enumerated here for the first time, although reference to them is made earlier collectively in 2.45, 3.5 and 3.27. The whole world of multiplicity is evolved by the permutation and combination of these three Guṇās or constituents of Prakṛti, the material Nature and their evolutes. Detailed description of these with reference to their part in producing multiplicity in creation and various character types is given in later chapters, especially in 14.5-19, 17. 2-22, 18. 7-9, 18.40 etc. In the Sāṃkhya system Prakṛti with its constituents is an independent existence, moved by its own inherent dynamism for the fulfilment of the purpose of the Puruṣas or centres of consciousness, with which it is associated. In classical Sāṃkhya, there is no place for an Iśvara, a Supreme Spirit in whom Prakṛti and Puruṣa are unified and who controls them in their evolution.

Now the Vedānta rejects this position and accepts the Prakṛti and the Puruṣas of the Sāṃkhya only as the Śaktis or potencies of Iśvara, the Supreme Being. The former, as has already been taught, is His Lower Nature, (*Aparā-prakṛti*) and the latter Higher Nature (*parā-prakṛti*). So the three Guṇas, the constituents of Prakṛti, are spoken of as being in Him, because He is their support. But they do not affect Him in any way, as they do the individual centres of consciousness or the Jīvas forming His Higher Prakṛti. Sri Ramakrishna explains this by an analogy: the snake has within itself poison, but that poison has no effect on it, although it is deadly to others.

Prakṛti with its three Guṇas deludes the Jīva with body-consciousness and hides the Divine from him. This is the state of ignorance which leads to the Jīva's involvement in the transmigratory cycle. This ignorance can be overcome only by Divine grace, which He bestows on a Jīva that takes absolute shelter in Him.

3. *Vr.15*: The Gītā in the 16th Chapter elaborates these two types of characters—the *Daivī* or the divine, and *Āsurī*, or the demoniac. The latter type is dominated by lust and greed, and has a sense of value, and therefore of reality, only for objects that satisfy these cravings and for their off-shoots like pride, jealousy, cruelty etc. Their nature makes them think of spiritual verities and values as purely illusory, a pursuit reserved for fools. They wallow in worldliness without attaining to salvation in any near future, until suffering mellows their pride or the grace of God or of any divine personage lifts them up. Sri Ramakrishna illustrates this type in his parable of the fisherman and the three kinds of fish. Some fish escape before the net falls. They are the *Nitya Siddhas*, the ever free. Some break open the net after it has fallen; they are the aspirants who strive and get liberation. The third type are the fish that burrow into the mud as the net falls, thinking that security lies there. These are the *Baddhas*, the bound ones, who wallow in worldliness and never seek to get out of it. These correspond to the persons with *Āsuric* nature mentioned here.

This division of the Jīvas into Daivic and *Āsuric* is the basis of the doctrine of *Tāratamya* or comparative qualitative difference between Jīvas, forming an important teaching in the systems of Mādhva and Vallabhācārya.

4. *V.18*: This can be translated also as 'Jñāni is my own self', and interpreted as asserting the unity of the individual self with *Iśvara*. While monistic thinkers interpret it that way, others take it to mean that God is so fond of the devotee of this type that He is almost dependent on him. In the *Bhāgavata* (S.K. IX. 63) it is stated: "I am a slave of My devotees. I am as it were without freedom. For My heart is in the grip of the devotee; for, such is my love of the devotee." Such devotees feel 'God as their own' and God too loves them as His own; in this sense they are one with Him. The Bhakta of this type, is called here a *Jñāni*. He is distinguished from the three other types of Bhaktas in that he

seeks nothing from the Lord, not even Mokṣa. Such a state of mind is described in the *Bhāgavata* as '*Nairapekṣya*'. To such a one the Lord gives Himself. This doctrine is embodied in the *Bhāgavata* Verse V. 6.18: "I give Mukti to some, but Bhakti seldom." The Bhakta referred to here as *Jñāni*, is a devotee of this unique type, before whom God even humbles Himself, as in the case of Yudhiṣṭhira, Ambariṣa etc. For, such exalted souls reject liberation, the supreme gift of the Lord and choose eternal service of Him without any ultimate motive and irrespective of what comes to them, be it enjoyment or suffering.

5. *Vrs.20-23*: The Vedic religion maintains that the Supreme Being has manifested Himself as several Deities, who represent His particular powers. It is not that Vedic religion teaches a primitive polytheism, as its detractors hold. Unity of Godhead is a well-known doctrine, but it is also accepted that just as the one God has manifested Himself as the world of multiplicity, so also He has manifested Himself as Deities. They are the expressions of His power. There are various texts inculcating the worship of Deities for the attainment of boons or material welfare. The devotion of most persons is mainly motivated by worldly needs like cure of diseases, success in one's effort, securing wealth etc., and when the worship of a particular Deity is found efficacious, many become votaries of that Deity. It is here pointed out that these ignorant votaries do not understand that the powers of the Deities are derived from the Supreme Being and that it is the Supreme Being Himself that gives them the desired fulfilment.

It appears from this that Kṛṣṇa is hereby exhorting people to worship the Supreme Being Himself for their material wants too or to look upon the Deities only as the symbols of the Supreme Being and thereby convert their worship into the worship of the Most High. There is an idea among devotional circles that devotees should approach the Supreme Being only for enlightenment and liberation and that praying to Him for small fulfilments will be like seeking a fruit or a cucumber from an emperor. But here Sri Kṛṣṇa seems to hold a different view, as he considers both the distressed (*ārta*) and the success-seeker (*arthārthī*) as devotees, and calls them also as noble (*udārāḥ*). Purāṇas have many examples of high-souled devotees seeking these smaller helps from the Supreme Being. Dhruva, Gaṇendra, Pāṇḍavas etc. are examples of this.

In recent times there is the conspicuous example of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatīri, the author of *Nārāyaṇīyam* who approached the Lord for relief from ailment, but he adds, while praying for health, that a modicum of health is needed for the practice of devotion, and that it is why he is approaching Him for it.

Or perhaps Sri Kṛṣṇa is referring here to the tradition of propitiating Deities by some and thereby showing the difference between such worship and the adoration of Divine Incarnations. This becomes clear in the very next verse where he criticises the blindness of people in not recognising the Divine Incarnations and not taking to their adoration.

6. V.24: The materialistic or the common sense point of view of man is expressed in Gītā 2.28 where it is said of man: "Living beings came from where we do not know (*avyaktādīni*). They are seen as distinct individuals in the middle (*vyaktamadhyāni*). And they pass away into where we do not know (*avyakta-nidhanāni*)."
Ordinary men, especially most of His contemporaries, take the Lord Incarnate only as an ordinary man, may be with great powers, with a background and future as described in the verses quoted above. It will be seen that this was true of Rāma of whom even many of the Rṣis of Daṇḍakāraṇya declared that they knew him to be the 'son of Daśaratha' and not as the Divinity Incarnate. Even Kṛṣṇa was not recognised by many of his contemporaries as anything more than a great Yādava, though according to the *Bhāgavata* account many great men and those who came into intimate contact with him recognised his divinity. Here in the verse under comment, it is said that this is the case with the average men who are characterised as *abuddhayaḥ*, ignorant. It is probably worldly attachments that stand in the way of their recognising Him. The recognition and worship of the Incarnation stands on a different footing from that of deities. The Lord Incarnate is hypostatic with the Supreme Being, and His worship is the worship of the Supreme Being Himself. Devotion to the Lord Incarnate leads directly to Bhakti, Jñāna and Mukti.

But the background of the Divine Incarnate, making him specially significant, is his being rooted in the Supreme Divinity. He is the Anugraha-Śakti, the redeeming power of God, manifesting as an embodied being for a cosmic purpose. Men at large are not

able to plumb the depths of the personality of the Incarnate and grasp his transcendental significance.

7. V.25: The reason for all not recognising Him when he incarnates is given. He appears veiled by the Yogamāyā or His Divine Power. This obscuration is caused by His assuming the nature of a human being. A Divine Incarnation is the expression of Divinity through humanity. Unless He lives the life of man with many of his limitations, the Incarnation defeats the purpose of His manifestation to a great extent. The disciples and followers of Incarnations of the past, especially in the case of the Paurāṇika Incarnations, have depicted the miraculous side of Incarnations to such an extent as to obliterate their humanity and convert them into Deities to be worshipped and not followed. Swami Saradananda has discussed this point elaborately in his *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, wherein he has attributed this tendency on the part of the followers of Incarnations to the fear that if their human side is too much revealed, people's faith in their divinity may be affected.

A desperate effort to hide the human side of an Incarnation is seen among the interpreters of the *Bhāgavata* in regard to Kṛṣṇa. In the Text it is clearly stated that he was struck by the arrow of a hunter and shortly after, he passed away, burning his body in the fire of Yoga. But the *Bhāgavata* interpreters do not want to admit that his body was destroyed like that of a mortal, and so by clever devices of interpretation, they seek to construe this passage to mean that his very physical body disappeared into Vaikuntha, more or less like what is believed about Jesus. These interpreters in their vain effort to hide everything human about Kṛṣṇa, forget that a few verses later, the Text itself states again that he allowed his physical body, though it was a perfect one, to be destroyed, so that his followers might not attach too much importance to their own physical bodies.

This intermingling of the human and the divine is most clearly seen in a perfectly historical Incarnation as Sri Ramakrishna. The disciples of the Master never tried to hide his human side and the weaknesses incidental to it. The human side of his character is most candidly disclosed in his biography, and the fact of his having passed away due to cancer of the throat is also openly discussed

and described. But none the less the disciples were also witnesses to the manifestation of Divinity in him side by side. This consisted chiefly in his capacity to rouse the spiritual consciousness of ignorant people. How the impetuous free thinker Narendranāth was converted into Swami Vivekananda, how the Bohemian Girish Chandra was made into an ideal devotee, and how on occasions like the Kalpataru day the Master roused the spiritual consciousness of large numbers of people at once, are well-known to the readers of his biography. Less widely known instances are those of how a rowdy named Manmatha was converted into a saint, and how a scavenger who approached him for liberation was blessed by him to become a man of illumination.

In fact the real divinity of Incarnations does not consist in the miracles that poets and mythologists have described with avidity in their language of exaggeration, but in their capacity to help man overcome the effect of Karma and gain spiritual enlightenment. Ordinary men do not see this side of Divine Incarnations clearly, because they are moved by gross worldly desires and are able to see divinity only when something extraordinary in a physical sense like the lifting of the Govardhana or the destruction of Pūtana or the building of a bridge across the sea are brought to their notice. It is long after the Incarnation passes away that his personality and teachings gain momentum and wide acceptance and He is recognised by large numbers of men.

8. *Vrs. 29-30*: The technical terms contained in these verses are explained in the early verses of the next chapter.

Chapter VIII

ब्रह्मसूत्रयोगः

THE WAY TO IMPERISHABLE BRAHMAN

SUMMARY

Divine Immanence and Transcendence: (1-4) Explaining the Divine mystery, Sri Krishna says: I am the Supreme Imperishable Brahman. My Inherent Nature is what manifests as the Indwelling Spirit and as the Creative Act which brings forth all beings into existence. There is also My perishable manifestation as the great elements; there is My presence in them as the Puruṣa (Immanent Self) guiding their evolution. And in all individual beings I am present as the Lord of Sacrifice, the generator and enjoyer of all actions.

Remembrance of the Lord at Death: (5-14) Whoever leaves the body thinking of Me alone, attains to My state undoubtedly. It is only those who think of Me intently during their life-time that will have this good fortune of remembering Me at death. Therefore remember Me always and do your duty in life. Practise the discipline of concentration on Me, the omniscient, the eternal, the Foundational Being, whose spiritual radiance dispels all darkness of ignorance. The syllable Om is My sound symbol. With that as the support, draw the mind into your innermost being and then concentrate on Me, the subtlest of entities and the seed of all forms.

Creative Cycles: (15-22) For those who attain to Me through the practice of this all-absorbing devotion, there is no return to this mortal sphere in the course of this endless cosmic cycles. For a thousand divine years, which is the day-time of Brahmā, the

creator, the universe is manifest, and during the succeeding thousand divine years, the night of Brahmā, it lies latent in Me. Thus all beings up to Brahmā dissolve in Me and come out into manifestation. Only the devotee whose mind is ever fixed on Me, is able to come out of this eternally recurring cyclic process, fraught with impermanence and suffering. The manifested universe is My gross form, and the subtle state into which it relapses in dissolution is the causal state of that form of Mine. Transcending this universe in its gross and subtle conditions but at the same time containing and indwelling them, is My supreme aspect, attainable by single-minded and whole-hearted devotion.

The Life Hereafter: (23-28) There are two paths by which embodied beings depart after death—the dark path and the radiant path. Those who are attached to worldly values go along the dark path and come back to this world again at the exhaustion of the effects of their Karma. Those who are unattached and practise whole-hearted devotion to the Supreme Being, go along the bright path and never return.

अर्जुन उवाच

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।

अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

*Kim tad brahma kim adhyātmaṁ kiṁ karma puruṣ'ottama /
adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktaṁ adhidaivaṁ kim ucyate? //1//*

Puruṣottama : O Supreme Lord! *proktaṁ* : spoken of *tat* : that
Brahma : Brahman *kim* : what? *adhyātmaṁ* : spirit in manifestation
kim : what? *karma* : work *kim* : what? *adhibhūtaṁ* : underlying
material manifestation *kim* : what? *adhidaivam* : underlying mani-
festation as divinities *ca* : and *kim* : what *ucyate* : is spoken of?

Arjuna said:

1. O Supreme Lord! What is Brahman (the Absolute)? What is the Spirit (the Adhyātma)? What is work (Karma)? And what is that which underlies the material manifestations (Adhibhūta), and what, the divinities (Adhidaiva)?⁴

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।

प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ 2 ॥

*Adhiyajñāḥ katham ko'tra dehe'smin Madhusūdana /
prayāṇa-kāle ca katham jñeyo'si niyat'ātmabhiḥ* //2//

Madhusūdana : O slayer of Madhu! *atra* : here *asmin* : in this
dehe : body *adhiyajñāḥ* : one underlying all sacrifices *kāḥ* : who?
katham : how? *Prayāṇakāle ca* : And at the time of death *niyatā-*
tmabhiḥ : by self-restrained ones *katham* : how *jñeyāḥ asi* : ought
to be known?

2. O slayer of Madhu! Who is the Adhiyajña (the spirit underlying sacrifices) that resides in this body, and how does he do so? How should a man of self-restraint meditate on the Supreme Being at the time of death?

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।

भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ 3 ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca:

*Akṣaram brahma paramam svabhāvo'dhyātmam ucyate /
bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo visargaḥ karma-samjñitaḥ* //3//

Paramam : Supreme *akṣaram* : the immutable Being *brahma* :
Brahman *svabhāvaḥ* : Brahman's manifestation as spirit (Jīva)
indwelling the body *adhyatma* : pertaining to the body *ucyate* :
is spoken of; *bhūtabhāvodbhavarāḥ* : what brings all objects into
being *visargaḥ* : creative act *karma-samjñitaḥ* : what is called
work.

The Blessed Lord said:

3. Brahman is Akṣara, the Immutable Being than whom there is none higher. Brahman's power manifested in every body as the transmigrating self (the Jīva) is the *Adhyātma*. The creative act (identified with sacrificial offering) which brings all beings into existence is *Karma* (work).

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहमृतां वर ॥ 4 ॥

Adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaś' c'ādhidaivatam /
adhiyajña'ham ev'ātra dehe deha-bhṛtām vara //4//

Dehabhṛtāmvara : O noblest among men! *adhibhūtaṁ* : material nature *kṣaraḥ* : perishable, changeful *bhāvaḥ* : aspect; *puruṣaḥ* : indwelling spirit or cosmic soul *ca* : and *ādhidaivatam* : that which underlies all the divinities; *ātra dehe* : in this body *aham eva* : I myself am : *adhiyajñaḥ* : that which underlies all worship.

4. O noble~One! The perishable Nature is the material aspect (Adhibhūta). The cosmic soul is the basis of all divine manifestations (Adhidaivata); and I verily form the Adhiyajña, the one object of all worship which men perform with their body and mind.

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ 5 ॥

Anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktvā kalevaram /
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ yāti n'āstyatra saṁśayaḥ //5//

Yaḥ : Who *antakāle* : at the time of death *ca* : even *mām* : Me *eva* : alone *smaran* : thinking of *kalevaram* : body *muktvā* : abandoning *prayāti* : goes, *saḥ* : he *madbhāvaṁ* : my state *yāti* : attains; *ātra* : in this *na* : no *saṁśayaḥ* : doubt.

5. Whoever thinks of Me alone even at the time of death, attains to My state on abandoning the body. There is no doubt about this.²

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावं भावितः ॥ 6 ॥

Yaṁ-yaṁ v'āpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram /
taṁ-tam ev'aiti Kaunteya sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ //6//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *ante* : at the time of death *yam yam yā api bhāvam* : whatever object *smaran* : thinking of *kalevaram* : body *tyajati* : leaves, *sadā* : always *tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ* : having been ever absorbed in the thought thereof *tam tam eva* : that alone *eti* : attains.

6. O son of Kuntī! Whatever object a person thinks of at the time of death, having been absorbed in its thought all through,—he attains to that object alone.

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिमिवैष्यस्यसंशयः ॥ ७ ॥

Tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara yudhya ca /
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir mām ev'aiśyasy asamśayaḥ //7//

Tasmāt : Therefore *sarveṣu-kāleṣu* : at all times *mām* : Me *anusmara* remember *yudhya ca* : and fight. *Mayy arpita-manobuddhiḥ* : One whose mind and understanding are dedicated to Me, *mām eva* : Me alone *eśyasi* : shall come *asamśayaḥ* : undoubtedly.

7. Therefore fight, remembering Me always. One who has dedicated his mind and understanding to Me, shall come to Me alone, undoubtedly.

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ८ ॥

Abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena cetasā n'ānya-gāminā /
paramam puruṣam divyam yāti Pārth'ānucintayan //8//

Abhyāsayogayuktena : Established in spiritual communion through practice *nānyagāminā* : not straying to anything else *cetasā* : with a mind *anucintayan* : continuously thinking *divyam* : divine *paramam puruṣam* : Supreme Being *Yāti* : goes.

8. Thinking of Me continuously, with a mind trained in the practice of spiritual communion and freed from the ten-

dency to stray away to other objects, one attains to the Divine Spirit Supreme.

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुसरेद्यः ।

सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ९ ॥

प्रयाणकाले मनसाचलेन भक्त्यायुक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥

*Kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāram aṇor aṇīyāṁsam anusmared yaḥ /
sarvasya dhātāram acintya-rūpam āditya-varṇam tamasaḥ
parastāt //9//*

*prayāṇa-kāle manasā'cālena bhaktyā yukto yoga-baleṇa c'aiva /
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣam
upaiti divyam //10//*

*Acalena manasā : with a steady mind bhaktyā : with devotion
yogabalena ca : and with the strength born of Yoga eva : verily
yuktaḥ : endowed yaḥ : who prāṇam : vital energy bhruvoḥ : of
the brows madhye : middle samyak : properly āveśya : having
fixed, kavim : all-knowing purāṇam : primeval aṇor aṇīyāṁsam :
subtler than an atom sarvasya : of all dhātāram : sustainer anuśāsi-
tāram : director acintyarūpam : of incomprehensible form
ādityavarṇam : glorious as the sun tamasaḥ parastāt : beyond
darkness puruṣam : Indwelling Spirit prayāṇakāle : at the time of
death anusmaret : remembers, saḥ : he divyam : divine tam : that
param : Supreme Being upaiti : attains.*

9-10. He who, with a mind steady and endued with devotion and strength born of spiritual practice, fixes his entire life-force between the eye-brows at the time of death, and contemplates on Him who is all-knowing, primeval, subtler than even an atom, sustainer and director of all, glorious like the sun, and beyond all darkness of inertia and ignorance—he verily attains to that Supreme Being.

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।

यद्विष्णुतो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११ ॥

*Yad akṣaram veda-vido vadanti viśanti yad yatayo vīta-rāgāḥ /
yad icchanto brahma-caryam caranti tat te padam saṁgrahēṇa
pravakṣye* //11//

Yat : What *vedavidāḥ* : Vedic scholars *akṣaram* : the imperishable *vadanti* : call, *vītarāgāḥ* : devoid of all worldly attachments *yatayaḥ* : Sannyasins *viśanti* : enter, *yat* : what *icchantāḥ* : desiring to know *brahmācaryam* : life of continence and asceticism *caranti* : follow, *tat* : that *padam* : state *saṁgrahēṇa* : in brief *te* : to you *pravakṣye* : I shall tell.

11. That which Vedic scholars call the Imperishable (Akṣara), which Sannyasins devoid of worldly attachments enter, desiring which men follow the life of continence and asceticism,— that state I shall declare to you in brief.

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।

मूर्धन्याध्यायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणम् ॥ 12 ॥

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुसरन् ।

यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ 13 ॥

*Sarva-dvārāṇi saṁyamya mano hṛdi nirudhya ca /
mūrdhny ādhāy'ātmanāḥ prāṇam āsthito yoga-dhāraṇam* //12//

*Om ity ek'ākṣaram brahma vyāharan mām anusmaran /
yaḥ prayāti tyajan deham sa yāti paramām gatim* //13//

Yaḥ : Who *sarvadvārāṇi* : all the portals of the body *saṁyamya* : closing *munaḥ* : the mind *hṛdi* : in the heart *nirudhya* : confining *ātmanāḥ* : one's own *prāṇam* : vital energy *mūrdhni* : into the head *ādhāya* : depositing *yogadhāraṇam* : concentration *āsthitaḥ* : established in 'om' *iti ekākṣaram brahma* : the single syllabled Mantra 'Om' denoting Brahman *vyāharan* : uttering *mām* : Me 'ca' : and *anusmaran* : remembering *deham* : body *tyajan* : abandoning *prayāti* : departs, *saḥ* : he *paramām gatim* : to the highest state, liberation *yāti* ; goes.

12-13. Established in spiritual communion by inhibiting all sensations, concentrating on the heart centre, and drawing

up the vital energies to the head, one should meditate on Me along with the utterance of the single-syllabled mantra Om denoting Brahman. Departing from the body in this state, one attains liberation.

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ 14 ॥

Ananya-cetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ /
tasya'āham sulabhaḥ Pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ //14//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *yaḥ* : who *ananyacetāḥ* : having no thought on other matters *satatam* : constantly *nityaśaḥ* : daily *mām* : Me *smarati* : remembers, *tasya* : of that *nityayuktasya* : of ever-attuned *yoginaḥ* : of the Yogin *aham* : I *sulabhaḥ* : one easily attained.

14. He who, with a mind undistracted by other things, thinks of Me constantly every day—to the Yogi thus ever-attuned, I am easy of attainment, O son of Pṛthā!

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ 15 ॥

Mām upetya punar-janma duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam /
n'āpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ samsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ //15//

Mām : Me *upetya* : having realised *paramām* : supreme *samsiddhiṁ* : perfection *gatāḥ* : reaching *mahātmānaḥ* : great ones *punaḥ* : again *duḥkhālayam* : the abode of sorrows *aśāśvatam* : transient *janma* : birth *na* : not *āpnuvanti* : attain.

15. No more is re-birth, no more this home of transience and misery, for those great-souled ones who have attained to supreme perfection by realising Me.

आब्रह्म भुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ 16 ॥

*Ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar-āvartino'rjuna /
mām upetya tu Kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate* //16//

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *ābrahmabhuvanāt* : from the world of *Brahmā* to the earth *lokāḥ* : all spheres *punarāvartinaḥ* : are subject to re-birth. *Kaunteya* : O son of Kunti! *mām* : Me *upetya* : having attained *tu* : but *punarjanma* : re-birth *na vidyate* : does not occur.

16. All the worlds from the realm of *Brahmā* down to the earth, are subject to re-birth. But, O Arjuna, one who has attained to Me is never reborn.³

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ 17 ॥

*Sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ /
rātrim yuga-sahasr'āntāṁ te'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ* //17//

Sahasra-yuga-paryantam : Lasting for a thousand Yugas (ages) *yat* : which *Brahmaṇah* : of *Brahmā ahaḥ* : day time, *yugasahasrāntam* : ending in thousand years *rātrim* : night, (ye : who) *janāḥ* : people *viduḥ* : know, *te* : they *ahorātravidaḥ* : knowers of night and day.

17. Those who have an understanding of *Brahmā*'s day time, which lasts for a thousand ages, and of his night time, which too is of equal length,—they indeed understand what a day is and what a night.

अव्यक्ताद्यव्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहोरात्रागमे ।

रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंश्ले ॥ 18 ॥

*Avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavanti aharāgame /
Rātry-āgame prahyante tatr'aiv'avyakta samślṛake* //18//

Aharāgame : At the dawn of the day (of *Brahmā*) *avyaktāt* : from the unmanifest (*Prakṛti*) *sarvāḥ* : all *vyaktayaḥ* : manifestations *prabhavanti* : come to have. *Rātry-āgame* : At the beginning of the

night (of Brahmā) *avyakta-samjñake* : in what is called unmanifest
eva ca : in that itself *pralīyante* : dissolve.

18. At the dawn of the day of Brahmā this whole universe comes into manifestation from the Unmanifest (Prakṛti). When the night begins, it dissolves in that Unmanifest itself.

मृतप्रायः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ 19 ॥

Bhūta-grāmaḥ sa ev'āyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā prakīyate /
rātry-āgame'vaśaḥ Pārtha prabhavaty ahar-āgame //19//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *saḥ eva* : that *bhūtagrāmaḥ* : collectivity of beings *avaśaḥ* : inexorably *bhūtvā bhūtvā* : coming into being again and again *rātryāgame* : at the coming of night *pralīyate* : dissolves, *aharāgame* : at the dawn of day *prabhavati* : comes forth.

19. O son of Pṛthā! This vast collectivity of beings comes inexorably into manifestation again and again, dissolving at the commencement of night, and again coming forth at the dawn of day.

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ 20 ॥

Paras tasmāt tu bhāvo'nyo'vyakto'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ /
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati //20//

Yaḥ : Which *tasmāt avyaktāt* : from the unmanifested state *tu* : but *anyaḥ* : different *paraḥ* : supreme *sanātanaḥ* : eternal *avyaktaḥ* : Unmanifested, *saḥ bhāvaḥ* : that being *sarveṣu* : all *bhūteṣu* : entities *naśyatsu* : when destroyed *na vinaśyati* : is not destroyed.

20. Different from this unmanifested state is the supreme and eternal Unmanifested whose Being remains unaffected even when everything is destroyed.⁴

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तस्मात् परमं मम ॥ 21 ॥

*Avyakto'kṣara ity'uktas tam āhuḥ paramām gatim /
yam prāpya na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama* //21//

Avyaktaḥ : The Unmanifested *akṣaraḥ* : the Imperishable *iti* : thus *uktaḥ* : called *tam* : that (state) *paramām* : ultimate *gatim* : goal *āhuḥ* : describe; *yam* : which *prāpya* : attaining *na nivartante* : do not return; *tad* : that *mama* : My *paramam* : supreme *dhāma* : abode.

21. Know that state, which is called the Unmanifested and the Imperishable, to be the ultimate goal of all. That is My supreme abode. Attaining to that man is not reborn.

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।

यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥ 22 ॥

*Puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ Pārtha bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā /
yasy'āntaḥsthāni bhūtāni yena sarvam idam tatam* //22//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *bhūtāni* : beings *yasya* : whose *antaḥsthāni* : residing within, *yena* : by whom *sarvam idam* : all this *tatam* : is pervaded, *saḥ* : that *paraḥ* : supreme *Puruṣaḥ* : Being *ananyayā* : unswerving and exclusive *bhaktyā* : by devotion *labhyaḥ* *tu* : attainable.

22. That Supreme Puruṣa, the abode of all beings and the indweller of them all, can be attained by unswerving and exclusive devotion to Him.

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।

प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ 23 ॥

*Yatra kāle tv anāvṛttim āvṛttim c'aiva yogināḥ /
prayātā yānti taṁ kālaṁ vakṣyāmi Bharatarṣabha* //23//

Bharatarṣabha : O the noblest of the Bharata race! *Yatra kāle tu* : during what time (under the guidance of which deities) *prayātāḥ* : dying *yoginaḥ* : Yogis *anāvṛttim tu* : the path of non-return *yānti* : go, *āvṛttim ca eva* : the path of return also, *tam* : that *kālam* : time *vakṣyāmi* : I shall declare.

23. I shall now tell you, O noblest of Bharatas, of the circumstances, dying under which a Yogi never returns to this world and also of the time, dying when, he is sure to return.⁵

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।

तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ 24 ॥

Agnir jyotir ahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṇmāsā uttarāyaṇam /
tatra prayātā gacchanti brahma brahma-vido janāḥ //24//

Agniḥ : Fire *jyotiḥ* : light *ahaḥ* : day-time *śuklaḥ* : the bright fortnight *ṣaṇmāsāḥ* : six months *uttarāyaṇam* : northern course of the sun, *tatra prayātāḥ* : departing by this path *Brahmavidaḥ janāḥ* : knowers of Brahman *Brahma* : Brahman *gacchanti* : go.

24. Fire, light, day-time, bright fortnight, six months of the northern course of the sun—the knowers of Brahman who depart along this path, attain to Brahman.

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।

तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥ 25 ॥

Dhūmo rātris tathā kṛṣṇaḥ ṣaṇmāsā dakṣiṇāyanam /
tatra cāndramasaṁ jyotir yogī prāpya nivartate //25//

Dhūmaḥ : Smoke *rātriḥ* : night *tathā* : likewise *kṛṣṇaḥ* : black fortnight *ṣaṇmāsāḥ dakṣiṇāyanam* : the six months of the southern course of the sun *tatra (prayātāḥ)* : taking this path *yogī* : the Yogi *cāndramasaṁ jyotiḥ* : the lunar light *prāpya* : attaining *nivartate* : returns.

25. Smoke, night and likewise the black fortnight and the six months of the southern course of the sun—the Yogi

departing by this path attains to the lunar sphere and thence returns.

शुक्लरूपे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥ 26 ॥

*Śukla-kṛṣṇe gatī hy ete jagataḥ śāśvate mate
ekayā yāty anāvṛttim anyayā'vartate punaḥ* //26//

Hi : Verily *śuklakṛṣṇe* : bright and the dark *ete gatī* : these two ways *jagataḥ* : for the world *śāśvate* : eternal *mate* : considered. *Ekayā* : By one *anāvṛttim* : non-return (mokṣa) *yāti* : attains, *anyayā* : by the other *punaḥ āvartate* : takes birth again.

26. Verily, these two paths—the bright and the dark—are accepted as everlasting verities. By the one, the aspirant gains Mokṣa, the state of non-return, while the other leads him to rebirth.

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥ 27 ॥

*N'aite sṛtī Pārtha jānan yogī muhyati kaścana /
tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu yogayukto bhav'arjuna* //27//

Pārtha : O son of Prthā'. *ete* : these two *sṛtī* : paths *jānan* : knowing *kaścana yogī* : whichever Yogi *na muhyati* : is not deluded. *Tasmāt* : Therefore *Arjuna* : O Arjuna! *sarveṣu* : at all *kāleṣu* : times *yoga yuktaḥ* : steadfast in Yoga *bhava* : be.

27. O son of Prthā! Whoever among Yogis know these two paths, they are never deluded. Therefore, O Arjuna, be steadfast in Yoga at all times.

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रविष्टम् ।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥ 28 ॥

*Vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu c'aiva dāneṣu yat puṇya-phalaṁ
pradiṣṭam /
atyeti tat sarvaṁ idaṁ viditvā yogi paraṁ sthānam upaiti
c'ādyam //28//*

Vedeṣu : In the Vedas *yajñeṣu* : in the sacrifices *tapaḥsu* : in austerities *dāneṣu* : in charities *ca* : and *eva* : also *yat* : whatever *puṇya-phalam* : meritorious rewards *pradiṣṭam* : prescribed, *tat sarvaṁ* : all that *yogī* : Yogi *idaṁ* : this *viditvā* : knowing *atyeti* : transcends; *ādyam* : primeval *param* : supreme *padam* : state *upaiti ca* : and attains.

28. Knowing this, a Yogi transcends all the meritorious rewards that are prescribed for the study of the Vedas, for the performance of austerities, and for charities too, and attains to that primeval state which is the Supreme Being.

ओं तत्सविति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अक्षरब्रह्मयोगो
नामाष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥ ८ ॥

NOTES

1. *Vrs.*1-4: There are six sets of words of technical significance—the Supreme *Brahman* equated with *Akṣara* ; the *Adhyātma* with *Svabhāva* ; *Viśarga* with creative *Karma* ; the *Adhibūta* with *Kṣara* nature; the *Adhidaiva* with *Puruṣa*; and *Adhiyajña* with *Īśvara*.

In this very obscure passage, the Divine in His various aspects and functions seems to be described. *Akṣara* is undoubtedly the Supreme as the Impersonal Being.

The word *Svabhāva* is generally used for material Nature, known also as *Aparā-prakṛti* of the Lord. But here by equating

the expression with *Adhyātma*, what is generally described as His Para-prakṛti or higher Spiritual Nature i.e. the Jīva, is referred to by the expression. It is called *Adhyātma*, because it pertains to Self in relation to the body. It is the spirit manifest in every body, who is described in the Upaniṣads as the Jīva, a spark of the Fire.

The term Visarga, which is equated with Karma, literally means 'excretion, emission', which according to some interpreters means sexual intercourse. In a cosmic sense it is the creative will of God which is metaphorically referred to in terms of the same idiom as in the passage: "Great Nature is a womb to Me. I impregnate it with my seed (14.3)". It has also been interpreted in relation to the Vedic rite of sacrifice, and is referred to as such in Gīta in 3.14 '*karma brahmodbhavam*', sacrificial work arises from the Veda. It is the sacrificial offering, according to the Vedic ideology, that procures rain which helps the growth of vegetation, eating which men derive their fecundity. Thus Vedic Karma is connected with procreation.

That which pertains to the bodies of all beings is *Adhibhūta*. It is the changeful Nature, described as the *Aparā Prakṛti* of the Lord. All material combinations, including the bodies of beings, come out of it and undergo six kinds of modifications. When they perish, the substances constituting their bodies go back to their constituents. Thus material Nature as the substance subject to constant change is also imperishable *as a whole*. For the combinations coming out of it like the bodies of beings, change means in the end complete dissolution into the constituent elements.

Puruṣa is He who 'infills' everything. He is *Hiraṇyagarbha*, the first born in the creative process, who endows the senses with their powers and directs them in their functions. Another interpretation of the word is the 'collectivity of all individual spirits'. This will suit philosophies that admit ultimacy to the Jīvas as distinct entities. According to some the *Puruṣa* is the *Puruṣa* of the *Puruṣa sūkta*, the Cosmic Person, the dismemberment of whose body in sacrifice is the origin of the universe.

Adhiyajña means He who is the very practice of worship and who gives the fruits of all worship, whatever may be the Deity

that is invoked. So the Vedas declare *Yajño vai viṣṇuḥ*—*Yajña* is verily *Viṣṇu*. Man's tendency to worship arises from the sense of some power higher than himself presiding over his destiny. The Supreme Being is that power, and in whatever conception of Him or in the name of whatever deity worship and prayers are offered, it is only He who gives the rewards. The word '*dehe*', in the body, is used because all worship is done with the body and the mind depending on it.

2. *V.5*: The force of the word *ca*, translated here as 'even', is that it is only if the thought of God is the dominant idea of one's life, and has been occupying one's mind all through one's life, that the thought of Him will come to one's mind at the last moment. Man should not think hypocritically that he can live an unholy life all through, and achieve his spiritual welfare by thinking of Him at the last moment. One will find it impossible to do so.

3. *Vrs.16-19*: In these verses the Hindu doctrine of *Samsāra* and the cyclic process of time are stated. Creation is coterminous with time. Time has no beginning or end. It is endless, being cyclic. It is cyclic in its movement just as the individual's day and night are. The creative period, when all the worlds are in manifestation, is called *Kalpa*. It is followed by dissolution of the manifested world into the elemental condition. The period of dissolution is called *Pralaya*. *Pralaya* and *Kalpa*, which are of equal duration, alternate in a cyclic process. All the *Jīvas* are involved in this cyclic process, undergoing birth and death continuously according to their *Karma*, enjoying and suffering, subject to a temporary abeyance of the process when the whole of *Prakṛti* is in dissolution. But they come back to the old condition when a new *Kalpa* begins just as plants spring from seeds and man emerges from sleep. This entanglement in the cycle of births and deaths is *Samsāra*. The Hindu scriptures hold forth the delinking of the *Jīva* from this cyclic process of Time as the ultimate aim of evolution. The attainment of the delinking is called *Mokṣa*, liberation, to which reference is made in verse 16. Attaining the Lord is the way to *Mokṣa*.

The 17th verse also refers to the length of the periods of cosmic manifestation and dissolution. These periods are spoken of as the day-time and night of *Brahmā*, who is the Lord of creation.

Only a brief description of time scale is given. A fuller description is as follows: 1 human year makes a day and night of the celestials i.e. a full celestial day. 1200 such celestial years make one *catur-yuga* (i.e., 4,32,000 human years make one *Chaturyuga* or a cycle of four Yugas). 1000 *chatur-yugas* make one day-time of Brahmā (*Kalpa*). An equally long period is his night (*pralaya*). 365 such days and nights make 1 year of Brahmā. A hundred such years constitute his life span. The end of his life is marked by a major *Pralaya* (*Mahā-pralaya*) of duration equal to his life time. After that the creative cycle (*Mahā-kalpa*) starts again under a new Brahmā. The infinitude of time is thus depicted.

4. *Vrs.20-22*: In this and the succeeding verses, two *avyaktas* or undifferentiated entities are mentioned. One of them is *Prakṛti* in its rudimentary condition. This is called *Avyakta*, because all the effects dissolve in it without being destroyed. They remain latent in it as potentialities, under an unseen and unperceivable condition just as a tree exists in its seed. This *Avyakta* is the same as what is called *Aparā-Prakṛti*, the lower or material Power of the Lord, referred to in verses 7. 1-6.

As distinguished from this *Avyakta* is another *Avyakta* which is described in verse 21 as *Akṣara* or 'unchanging' also. Besides, it is described in verse 22 as *Puruṣa* or the 'All-pervading' attained through devotion of the highest order'. *Akṣara* means 'unchanging' or 'undecaying', this being its principal difference from the first *Avyakta*. The first *Avyakta*, though eternal as a collectivity, is pure change, under the influence of Time, involved in the cyclic and repetitive process of manifestation into effects and dissolution into seminal condition. But the second *Avyakta* is *Puruṣa*, the all-pervading Spirit, who is beyond the influence of Time, and whose power Time is. It is through devotion and surrender to Him that the *Jīva*, involved in *Samsāra*, the cyclic and continuing process of birth and deaths, can get release, as stated in verse 22. So the two *Avyaktas* are entirely different—the first called so because it is the unmanifest or *Avyakta* condition of effects, and the second because it is beyond the grasp of the senses and the mind.

5. *Vrs.23-26*: The teachings on eschatology contained in these verses are rather obscure, though the general meaning of it, being the description of the two ways of the progress of the *Jīva*

after death, is quite clear. *Deva-yāna* and *pitṛ-yāna* or *arcirādi-mārga* and *dhūmādi-mārga* are the technical terms for these two paths. The former means the Path of the Devas and the latter the Path of the Manes, as also the Path of Light and the Path of Smoke. The most confusing part of it is that it appears to give too much importance to the time of death, which is very difficult to associate with man's merits and demerits and his progress after death. For, many meritorious men can be seen to be dying at an inauspicious time and vice versa. Commentators therefore maintain that these references to time really denote the deities presiding over the entities, times and realms mentioned.

So we have to understand the passage as meaning thus: The Jīva of persons who have practised devotion to God and performed all their duties and works as offering to Him and without any desire for their fruits, will have a gradual spiritual progress, passing through the various realms, Fire, Light, etc., presided over by deities known by those names. The Jīva gradually attains to higher spiritual evolution in realms that foster spiritual growth and finally attains liberation. He does not come back to the earth sphere. This way of gradual spiritual progress is called *devayāna* or *archirādi-mārga* (the Path of Light).

The other way known as *Pitṛyāna* (the Way of the Manes) or *dhūmādi mārga* (the non-luminous path) is through realms known as *dhūma*, *rātri* etc., presided over by deities of those names. They attain to the Lunar Sphere. There they enjoy the fruits of the ritualistic and philanthropic actions of a meritorious nature, which they have performed with an eye on their fruits, and when the merits are exhausted they take rebirth on earth.

Notorious sinners go to the purgatory (*naraka*) where they suffer for their sinful acts, after which they are born in animal bodies or as humans under very miserable conditions. There is a fourth category of persons who have neither great merits nor great sins to their credit. They are the ineffective persons who live a humdrum life of a self-centred nature without being virtuous or vicious. They die and are again re-born without going to any other sphere, and go on continuously drifting in the cycle of birth and death with its petty enjoyments and great sorrows until they become spiritually awakened, and begin to cultivate devotion and dedicated action.

Chapter IX

राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः

THE SOVEREIGN SCIENCE AND SOVEREIGN SECRET

SUMMARY

Devotion as the highest value: (1-3) Sri Kṛṣṇa said: The doctrine of devotion is the noblest and the profoundest of all sciences. Experience is its proof. It is easy to practise and it is contributive to human welfare. Those who neglect it will be subject to the cycle of births and deaths, and will not attain to Me.

Devotion and understanding of the divine mystery: (4-10) Devotion is generated by the contemplation of My mystery and My transcendent glory. See how I am the Indwelling Spirit in all; but they do not contain Me; it is I that contain them. Yet in another sense it is not true that they rest in Me, because I, the pure and incorruptible Spirit, remain absolutely unaffected by their presence. Contemplate on this divine mystery—to be the creator and sustainer of this mighty universe and yet be not affected by it, as space is not by the fast and powerful winds that blow through it. My Power projects and withdraws into itself this extensive universe in Time's endless cyclic process. I remain the unaffected Overseer and Witness of this eternal process which my Prakṛti executes.

The Divine in all his aspects: (11-19) When I incarnate Myself as man, foolish people disdain Me, not recognising My transcendent nature, even as they do not recognise it behind this mighty manifested Nature. This is due to the dominance of demoniacal

tendencies in them. But great men endowed with godly tendencies, get an understanding of My divine mystery as the creator and as the incarnate, and thrilled by that knowledge, devote themselves to Me with an undivided mind. They sing My praise always, they prostrate to Me in loving adoration. Others worship Me with wisdom-sacrifice, communing with Me as the non-dual Self or as the distinct Divine Person or as the Immanent Spirit manifesting through all. I am the father, friend, witness, support and resting place of everything. All the universe is My manifestation, and I direct its evolution and its destiny. I am both immortality and total destruction, both Being (manifested effect state) and Non-being (unmanifested causal state).

The true worship of the Divine: (20-28) Those who adore Me with sacrifices desiring heavenly regions attain to them, but they have to return when the sacrificial merits are exhausted. But those who have no desire and think of Me alone always, are ever under My protection, and their welfare here and hereafter will be looked after by Me. Even persons who worship various Deities, are in fact worshipping Me alone, as I am their soul and they, My bodies; only their worship is crude and uninformed. My worship, however, is very simple. Very little of rituals and ingredients are required for it. A few flowers, water and leaves will do. If these offerings are sweetened with whole-hearted devotion, I consume them, as it were, eagerly. But all external worship is only a symbol of the total sacrifice and dedication one should practise. Whatever you do, eat, or give, whatever austerities you perform and charities you make,—all should be done as an offering unto Me. You should feel that the agency in respect of them as also their fruits are Mine and not yours. This is real Sannyasa, renunciation, and no action will then bind you with their good or bad effects.

Redemption open to all: (29-34) All are alike to Me, and to none am I hostile. If you find a difference in My relationship with devotees, it is only because the devotees cling to Me, and so I to them also. However degenerate a man may be, he is free to devote himself to My worship. One who is firmly resolved to do so, is on the path of moral and spiritual fulfilment, which will be his without much delay. Thus in the past, countless men, though low-born and sinful, have attained to Me through whole-hearted self-surrender. How much more easily will well-born and righteous

persons like you do so! Therefore love Me and surrender yourself to Me, body, mind and soul, and you will surely attain to Me.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥ 1 ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca:

Idam tu te guhyatamam pravakṣyāmy anasūyave |

jñānam vijñāna-sahitam yaj jñātvā mokṣayase 'śubhāt ||1||

Yat jñātvā : Knowing which *aśubhāt* : from evil or Samsāra
mokṣayase : shall be free, *idam* : this *guhyatamam* : profoundly
secret *jñānam* : knowledge *vijñānasahitam* : along with its realisa-
tion *anasūyave* : to one who does not cavil *te* : to you *pravakṣyāmi* :
shall declare.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. I shall now declare to you, who are endowed with reverence, that profoundest of all mystic doctrines and the way to its experience, by which you will be free from the baneful life of Samsāra.

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।

प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ 2 ॥

Rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam pavitram idam uttamam |

pratyakṣāvagamaṁ dharmyam susukham kartum avyayam ||2||

Idam : This *rājavidyā* : sovereign science *rājaguhyam* : sovereign
mystery *uttamam* : supreme *pavitram* : sanctifying *pratyakṣāvaga-*
mam : capable of direct experience *dharmyam* : in accordance with
Dharma or moral law *kartum* : to accomplish *susukham* : easy
avyayam : eternal.

2. It is a sovereign science, and a profound mystery. Supremely sanctifying, demonstrable by experience, and yielding imperishable results, it is also easy to perform and is in agreement with the moral law.¹

अश्रद्धाघानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥ 3 ॥

Āśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāsya paramtapa /
aprāpya mām nivartante mṛtyu-samsāra-vartmani //3//

Paramtapa : O the dread of opponents! *asya* : of this *dharmasya* : sacred doctrine *āśraddadhānāḥ* : having no faith *puruṣāḥ* : persons *mām* : Me *aprāpya* : not attaining *mṛtyu saṁsāra vartmani* : in the path of repetitive births and deaths *nivartante* : remain caught up.

3. Men without faith in this sacred doctrine (who continue to look upon the body as the self) fail to attain Me. They remain caught up in Samsāra, the eternally recurring cycle of births and deaths.

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ 4 ॥

Mayā tatam idam sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā /
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na c'āhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ //4//

Avyaktamūrtinā mayā : By Me the Unmanifested Being *idam* : this *sarvaṁ jagat* : whole universe *tatam* : is pervaded; *sarvabhūtāni* : all objects *matsthāni* : subsist in Me, *aham* : I *teṣu* : in them *na* : not *ca* : and *avasthitaḥ* : abiding.

4. All this world is pervaded by Me, the Unmanifested Being. All objects subsist in Me, but not I in them.²

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥ 5 ॥

Na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram /
bhūta-bhṛn na ca bhūta-stho mam'ātmā bhūta-bhāvanaḥ //5//

Bhūtāni : Objects *matsthāni na* : do not subsist in Me *ca* : and yet, *paśya* : behold *me* : My *aiśvaram* : divine *yogam* : mysterious power; *bhūtabhṛt* : support of all objects *bhūtabhāvanaḥ* : source

of all objects *bhūtasthaḥ na ca* : and yet not abiding in them i.e. limited by them *mama* : My *atmā* : being.

5. And yet objects do not abide in Me! Behold My mysterious Divine Power! Source and support of all objects, and yet not abiding in (i.e. limited by) them!³

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।

तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ 6 ॥

Yath'ākāśa-sthito nityam vāyuḥ sarvatra-go mahān /

tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni mat-sthāni'ty upadhāraya //6//

Sarvatragaḥ : Pervading everything *mahān* : mighty *vāyuḥ* : atmosphere *yathā* : in what way *nityam* : always *ākāśasthitaḥ* : abides in space, *tathā* : in that way *sarvāṇi bhūtāni* : all objects *matsthāni* : abide in Me, *iti* thus *upadhāraya* : know.

6. Know that, as the mighty atmosphere ever abides in space, so do all objects abide in Me (without restricting or limiting Me in the least).⁴

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिहाम् ।

कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥ 7 ॥

Sarva-bhūtāni Kaunteya prakṛtim yānti māmikām /

kalpa-kṣaye punas tāni kalp'ādau visṛjāmy aham //7//

Kaunteya : O son of Kunti! *kalpakṣaye* : at the end of a cosmic cycle (Kalpa) *sarva bhūtāni* : all beings *māmikām* : my own *Prakṛtim* : Prakṛti or Nature *yānti* : pass into, *kalpādau* : at the beginning of a cycle *punaḥ* : again *aham* : I *tāni* : them *visṛjāmi* : bring out again.

7. At the end of a cosmic cycle, O son of Kunti! all beings resolve into Nature (Prakṛti), which is My own, and at the the beginning of a new one (after the period of dissolution or Pralaya is over), I bring them out again.⁵

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टम्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥ ८ ॥

Prakṛtiṁ svām avaṣṭabhya visrjāmi punaḥ-punaḥ /
bhūta-grāmam imam kṛtsnam avaśam prakṛter vaśāt //8//

Svām: My prakṛtiṁ : Nature avaṣṭabhya : resorting to prakṛteḥ : of Nature vaśāt : under the sway avaśam : without freedom imam : this kṛtsnam : all bhūta grāmam : multitude of beings punaḥ-punaḥ : again and again visrjāmi : send forth.

8. Resorting to Prakṛti, Nature, which is My own Power, I send forth again and again this multitude of beings that are without any freedom, owing to Nature's sway over them.

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय ।
उदासीनचदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥ ९ ॥

Na ca mām tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanamjaya /
udāsīnavad āsīnam asaktam teṣu karmasu //9//

Dhanamjaya : O Arjuna! teṣu : in those karmasu : activities asaktam unattached udāsīnavad āsīnam : remaining like one unconcerned ca : and mām : Me tāni : those karmāṇi : activities na nibadhnanti : not bind.

9. These activities do not in any way bind me, because I remain detached like one unconcerned in their midst.⁶

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सृयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥ १० ॥

Mayā'dhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacar'ācaram /
hetunā'nena Kaunteya jagad viparivartate //10//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! mayā adhyakṣeṇa : with Me as the witnessing director prakṛtiḥ : Nature sacarācaram : this mighty universe of moving and non-moving beings sūyate : gives birth

to; *anena* : by this *hetunā* : means *jagat* : the world *viparivartate* : revolves.

10. Under My direction and control, Nature brings out this mighty universe of living and non-living beings. Thus does the wheel of this world revolve.

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।

परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥ 11 ॥

Avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam /

param bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-mah'eśvaram //11//

Mama : My *bhūtamaheśvaram* : as the supreme Lord of all that exists *param bhāvam* : higher nature *ajānantaḥ* : not knowing *mūḍhāḥ* : foolish men *mām* : Me *mānuṣīm tanum* : human form *āśritam* : assumed *avajānanti* : disregard.

11. Foolish men, without an understanding of My higher nature as the Supreme Lord of all that exists, disregard Me manifest in the human body.⁷

मोघाश मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।

राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥ 12 ॥

Mogh'āśā mogha-karmāṇo mogha-jñānā vicetasah /

rākṣasīm āsurīm c'aiva prakṛtiṁ mohiniṁ śritāḥ //12//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *mohinīm* : deluding *rākṣasīm* : of the Rakshasas or beings of cruel nature *āsurīm* : of the Asuras or beings of proud and passionate nature *ca* : and *prakṛtiṁ eva* : nature *śritāḥ* : possessed of, *mōghāśāḥ* : futile in their hopes *moghakar-māṇāḥ* : futile in their work *moghajñānāḥ* : futile in their knowledge *vicetasāḥ* : of perverted understanding.

12. Futile are the hopes, futile the works, and futile the knowledge of these men of perverted understanding who are deluded by their cruel, proud and passionate nature, characteristic of Rākṣasas and Asuras.

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।

भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ 13 ॥

*Mah'ātmānas tu mām Pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso jñātvā bhūt'ādim avyayam* //13//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *mahātmānaḥ* : high-souled ones *tu* : but *daivīm prakṛtim* : virtues characteristic of Devas *āśritāḥ* : partake of *mām* : Me *bhūtādim* : the source of all beings *avyayam* : the immutable *jñātvā* : understanding *ananyamanasaḥ* : with undistracted mind *bhajanti* : adore.

13. But the high souled ones, endowed with virtues characteristic of Devas, understand Me to be the Immutable and the source of all beings, and adore Me with a mind undistracted by anything else.⁸

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।

नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ 14 ॥

*Satatam kīrtayanto mām yatantaś ca dr̥ḍha-vratāḥ /
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate* //14//

Dr̥ḍhavratāḥ : Steadfast in their vows *yatantaḥ* : strenuous *ca* : and *satatam* : ever *mām* : Me *kīrtayantaḥ* : glorifying *nitya yuktāḥ* : ever integrated *mām* : Me *namasyantaḥ* : bowing to *ca* : and *bhaktyā* : with devotion *mām* : Me *upāsate* : worship.

14. Strenuous and steadfast in their vows, these ever-integrated devotees worship Me with devotion, always singing My glories and prostrating before Me.⁹

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।

एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ 15 ॥

*Jñāna-yajñena c'āpy anye yajanto mām upāsate /
ekatvena prthaktvena bahudhā viśvato-mukham* //15//

Anye : Others *api ca* : again *jñānayajñena* : by knowledge sacrifice *yajantaḥ* : making offering *viśvatomukham mām* : Me the All-inclusive whole *ekatvena* : as the One *prthaktyena* : as the Distinct *bahudhā* : as the immanent in the many *upāsate* : adore.

15. Others, again, who offer wisdom sacrifice to Me, worship Me the All-inclusive whole (All-formed)—as the One, as the Distinct, and as the Immanent in all.¹⁰

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।

मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ 16 ॥

Aham kratuṛ aham yajñāḥ svadhā'ham aham auśadham /
mantra'ham aham ev'ājyam aham agniṛ aham hutam //16//

Aham kratuḥ : I am the sacrifice, *aham yajñāḥ* : I am the worship, *aham svadhā* : I am the ancestral offerings, *aham auśadham* : I am the medicinal herb, *aham mantraḥ* : I am the Vedic hymn, *aham ājyam* : I am the sacrificial ingredients, *aham agniḥ* : I am the sacrificial fire, *aham hutam* : I am the sacrificial oblation also.

16. I am the sacrifice (*kratu*), I am the worship (*yajña*), I am the ancestral offering (*svadhā*), I am the medicinal herb. Again I am the Vedic hymn, I am the sacrificial ingredients. I am the sacrificial fire, and I am the sacrificial "oblation too".¹¹

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।

वेद्यं पवित्रमोँकारं ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥ 17 ॥

Pitā'hami asya jagāto mātā dhātā pitāmahāḥ /
vedyam pavitram om-kāra ṛk sāma yajur eva ca //17//

Asya : Of this *jagatāḥ* : universe *pitā* : father, *mātā* : mother, *pitāmahāḥ* : grandsire, *dhātā* : sustainer, *vedyam pavitram* : the Holy One to be known *Omkāraḥ* : the syllable Om, *ṛk yajur sāma ca* : also *Ṛk*, *Yajus* and *Sāma*.

17. To this world I am the father, the mother, the grandsire and the sustainer. I am the Holy One to be known, as also the syllable Om, the *Ṛk*, *Sāma* and *Yajus*.

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।

प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ 18 ॥

Gatir bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇam suhṛt /
prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānam nidhānam bījam avyayam //18//

Gatir : The goal *bhartā* : the supporter, *prabhuḥ* : the Lord, *sākṣī* : the witnessing consciousness, *nivāsaḥ* : the abode, *śaraṇam* : the refuge, *suhṛt* : the friend, *prabhavaḥ* : the origin, *pralayaḥ* : the dissolution, *sthānam* : the ground, *nidhānam* : treasure-house, *avyayam bījam* : imperishable seed.

18. The goal, the support, the Lord, and the consciousness witnessing—all this I am. I am again the abode, the refuge, and the friend of all, as also their origin, their dissolution, their ground, their treasure-house and their seed imperishable.

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।

अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ 19 ॥

Tapāmy aham, ahaṁ varṣam nigrhṇāmy utsrjāmi ca /
amṛtam c'aiva mṛtyuś ca sad asac c'āham Arjuna //19//

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *aham* : I *tapāmi* : give heat, *aham* : I *varṣam* : rain *utsrjāmi* : send forth, *nigrhṇāmi* : hold forth *ca* : and, *amṛtam* *ca* : immortality, *mṛtyuḥ* : death *ca* : and, *sat* : being *asat* : non-being *ca* : and *aham* : I *eva* : alone am.

19. I give heat, and I send forth as well as withhold rain. I am, O Arjuna! both immortality and death, both being and non-being.¹²

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गंति प्रार्थयन्ते ।

ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोकमश्नन्ति दिव्यान् दिवि देवभोगान् ॥20॥

Traividya māṁ soma-pāḥ pūta-pāpā
yajñair iṣṭvā svar-gatiṁ prārthayante /

te puṇyam āsādy sur'endra-lokam
aśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān

//20//

Traividyaḥ : Those who are versed in the three Vedas *somapāḥ* : those who drink the consecrated Soma juice in sacrificial rites *pūtapāpāḥ* : cleansed of their sins *yajñaiḥ* : with sacrifices *mām* : Me *iṣṭvā* : worshipping *svargatim* : attainment of heaven *prārthayante* : pray for. *te* : They *puṇyam* : attainable by meritorious deeds *surendralokam* : the heaven of Indra *āsādyā* : having attained, *divi* : in the heaven *divyān* : heavenly *devabhogān* : celestial enjoyments *aśnanti* : enjoy.

20. Men versed in the Vedas, cleansed of their sins by the performance of sacrifices attended with the drinking of consecrated Soma juice, pray for heavenly regions (as the reward for adoring Me with those rites). They go to the heaven of Indra, attainable by meritorious deeds, and enjoy heavenly felicities there.¹³

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥ 21 ॥

Te taṁ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṁ viśālaṁ
kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti |

evaṁ trayī-dharmam anuprapannā
gatāgataṁ kāma-kāmā labhante

//21//

Te : They *viśālaṁ* : the vast or having varied felicities *svargalokaṁ* : heavenly regions *bhuktvā* : having enjoyed, *puṇye kṣīṇe* : when the merits accruing from their deeds are exhausted *martyalokaṁ* : the world of men *viśanti* : enter. *Evaṁ* : In this way *trayīdharmam* : the Vedic sacrificial duties *anuprapannāḥ* : following *kāma kāmāḥ* : desire-ridden people *gatāgataṁ* : Samsāra or the repetitive state of going and returning *labhante* : obtain.

21. Having enjoyed the varied felicities of heaven for long, they come back to the world of human beings when their asset of meritorious deeds is exhausted. Thus, being desire-ridden, the followers of the Vedic sacrificial rites stagnate in Samsāra the repetitive state of going and returning.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ २२ ॥

Ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate |
teṣāṁ nity'ābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham //22//

Ye janāḥ : Whoever *ananyāḥ* : devoted to Me solely *cintayantaḥ* : thinking of *mām* : Me *paryupāsate* : continuously worship *nity'ābhiyuktānām teṣāṁ* : of those ever-steadfast devotees *yogakṣemaṁ* : supplying their wants and preserving their assets *aham* : I *vahāmi* : ensure.

22. Whoever, being devoted to me solely, engage themselves always in contemplation and worship of Me—to such ever-steadfast devotees I ensure the procurement of all their wants (salvation) and the preservation of their assets (worldly interests).¹⁴

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ २३ ॥

Ye'py anya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ |
te'pi mām eva Kaunteya yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam //23//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *ye* : who *bhaktāḥ* : devotees *śraddhayānvitāḥ* : endowed with faith *anyadevatāḥ* : other deities *api* : even *yajante* : worship, *te* : they *api* : also *avidhipūrvakam* : contrary to injunctions *mām* : Me *eva* : alone *yajante* : worship.

23. O son of Kuntī! Those devotees who worship even other deities with deep faith, they also are worshipping Me alone, though contrary to injunctions.¹⁵

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥ २४ ॥

Aham hi sarva-yajñānām bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca |
na tu mām abhijānanti tattven'ātaś cyavanti te //24//

Sarvayajñānām : Of all sacrifices *bhoktā* : enjoyer *ca* : and *prabhuḥ* : lord *ca* : and *aham* : I *eva* : only *hi* : indeed; *mām* : Me *tu* : but *tattvena* : in true nature *na abhijānanti* : do not know, *ataḥ* : therefore *te* : they *cyavanti* : fall.

24. I am indeed the only enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices. But they (the worshippers of other deities) do not understand Me in My true nature (as the object of all worship). So they fall.

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितृन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।

भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥ 25 ॥

Yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ /
bhūtāni yānti bhūt'ejyā yānti mad-yājino'pi mām //25//

Devavratāḥ : Those devoted to the deities *devān* : the deities *yānti* : go to, *pitṛvratāḥ* : those devoted to the manes *pitṛn* : the manes *yānti* : go to, *bhutejyāḥ* : those who worship the spirits *bhūtāni* : spirits *yānti* : attain to, *madyājinaḥ* : My worshippers *api* : but *mām* : Me *yānti* : come to.

25. The votaries of the deities go to the deities; of the manes, to the manes; and of the spirits, to the spirits, while My worshippers come to Me.

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्याप्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ 26 ॥

Patram puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayat'ātmanaḥ //26//

Yat : Who *patram* : leaf *puṣpaṁ* : flower *phalaṁ* : fruit *toyam* : water *bhaktyā* : with devotion *me* : to Me *prayacchati* : offer, *prayatātmanaḥ* : of that pure-hearted man *bhaktyupahṛtam tat* : that devout offering *aham* : I *aśnāmi* : joyously accept.

26. Whoever makes an offering to Me with devotion, be it of leaf, flower, fruit or water—that devout offering made by a pure-hearted man, I accept with joy.¹⁶

यत्करोषियदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ 27 ॥

Yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat /
yat tapasyasi Kaunteya tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam //27/

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *yat* : whatever *karoṣi* : you do, *yat* : whatever *aśnāsi* : you eat, *yat* : whatever *juhoṣi* : you offer in sacrifice, *yat* : whatever *dadāsi* : you give in charity, *yat* : whatever *tapasyasi* : austerity you perform, *tat* : that *madarpaṇam* : as offering to Me *Kuru* : do.

27. O son of Kuntī! Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give as charity, whatever austerity you perform—do that as offering unto Me. 17

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्षयसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।
संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ 28 ॥

Śubhāśubha-phalair evaṁ mokṣyase karma-bandhanaiḥ /
sannyāsa-yoga yuktātmā vimukto mām upaiṣyasi //28/

Evaṁ : Thus *śubhāśubhaphalaiḥ* : bearing good or evil fruits *karmabandhanaiḥ* : from bonds of Karma *mokṣyase* : shall be freed, *sannyāsayoga-yuktātmā* : with the heart firmly set on renunciation *vimuktaḥ* : liberated *mām* : Me *upaiṣyasi* : will come to.

28. Thus shall you be freed from the bonds of Karma bearing good and evil fruits. With the heart firmly set on renunciation, you will attain liberation and thereby come to Me.

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ 29 ॥

Samo'ham sarvabhūteṣu na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ /
ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu c'āpy aham //29/

Aham : I *sarvabhūteṣu* : towards all beings *samaḥ* : the same; *Me* : to Me *dveṣyaḥ na* : none is hateful, *priyaḥ na asti* : none is dear. *Ye* : Who *tu* : but *mām* : Me *bhaktiyā* : with devotion *bhajanti* : worship, *te* : they *mayi* : in Me, *aham* : I *api* : too *teṣu* : in them *ca* : and.

29. I am the same towards all beings. None is hateful, and none, dear to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion dwell in Me, and I too dwell in them.¹⁸

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ 30 ॥

Api cet sudurācārō bhajate mām ananya-bhāk /
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ //30//

Sudurācārāḥ : Confirmed sinner *api* : even *ananyabhāk* : with unwavering faith and devotion *mām* : Me *bhajate* : worships *cet* : if, *saḥ* : he *sādhur* : righteous *eva* : verily *mantavyaḥ* : must be considered. *Hi* : indeed, *saḥ* : he *samyak* : rightly *vyavasitaḥ* : resolved.

30. Even a confirmed sinner, if he worships Me with unwavering faith and devotion, must verily be considered as righteous; for he has indeed taken the right resolve.¹⁹

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ 31 ॥

Kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati /
Kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati //31//

Saḥ : He *kṣipram* : soon *dharmātmā* : righteous *bhavati* : becomes, *śaśvat* : lasting *śāntim* : peace *nigacchati* : attains. *Kaunteya* : O son of Kuntī! *Me* : My *bhaktaḥ* : devotee *na praṇaśyati* : never perishes *pratijānīhi* : may swear to this effect.

31. Soon will he become righteous and attain to lasting peace. No devotee of Mine will ever perish; you may swear to this effect, O Arjuna!

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ 32 ॥

Mām hi Pārtha vyapāśritya ye'pi syuḥ papa-yonayaḥ |
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te'pi yānti parām gatim //32//

Pārtha : O son of Prithā! *striyaḥ* : women *vaiśyāḥ* : Vaisyas
śūdrāḥ : Sūdras *ye* : who *syuḥ* : exist, *tathā* : in the same way
pāpayonayaḥ : persons of inferior origin (*ye syuḥ* : whoever exist),
te : they *api* : even *mām* : Me *vyapāśritya* : taking refuge in
parām gatim : the highest spiritual goal *yānti* : attain to.

32. O son of Prithā! Taking refuge in Me, women, Vaisyas, Sudras, and likewise even men of inferior birth, attain to the highest spiritual goal.

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।

अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥ 33 ॥

Kim punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rāja-rṣayas tathā |
anityam asukham lokam imam prāpya bhajasva mām //33//

Puṇyāḥ : Holy *brāhmaṇāḥ* : Brāhmaṇas *tathā* : also *bhaktāḥ* :
devoted *rajarṣayaḥ* : royal sages *kim punaḥ* : how much more!
Anityam : Impermanent *asukham* : unhappy *imam* : this *lokam* :
world *prāpya* : having come into *mām* : Me *bhajasva* : worship.

33. Then how much more so in the case of holy Brāhmaṇas and also of devoted royal sages! Having come into this impermanent and unhappy world, engage yourself in My worship.

मन्मना भव मद्रक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ 34 ॥

Man-manā bhava mad-bhakto madyājī mām namas-kuru |
mām ev'aiśyasi yuktvaivam ātmānam mat-parāyaṇaḥ //34//

Manmanāḥ : One with mind absorbed in Me *madbhaktaḥ* : My devotee *madyājī* : one sacrificing to Me *bhava* : become, *mām* : to Me *namskuru* : bow down. *Evam* : In this way *matparāyaṇaḥ* : having Me as the highest goal *ātmānam* : the mind *mayi* : in Me *yuktvā* : united *mām* : Me *eva* : alone *eṣyasi* : shall come to.

34. Let your mind be absorbed in Me. Be devoted to Me, sacrifice unto Me, and bow down to Me. Thus, having Me as your highest goal, and united with Me in mind, you shall come to Me alone.

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे राजविद्याराजगुह्य-
योगो नाम नवमोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥

NOTES

1. *Vr.2*: There are two words *Rājavidyā* and *Rājaguhyam*, translated here as sovereign knowledge and sovereign mystery. The prefix *Rāja* in these words is taken as showing the importance of the subject, and this it may very well be. But if we connect this passage with the two verses in an earlier chapter (Ch. 4. 1 & 2), where Kṛṣṇa speaks of the Yoga, which was known to *Rājārṣis* and forgotten in course of time, and which he was going to revive by imparting it now to Arjuna, we have to understand these teachings in a different way. He describes that teaching also as *rahasyam*, esoteric knowledge or a mystery. This word is used here too. There is then every possibility that the words *Rājavidyā* and *Rājaguhyam* are not merely meant to show the importance of the topic by describing it as 'a king among Vidyas and mysteries', but also to show that it is that forgotten Yoga of *Rājārṣis*, which was now being revived by Kṛṣṇa. This brings us to the distinction between the Vedic sacrificial cult and the *Bhāgavata Dharma* which Kṛṣṇa proclaimed. Kṛṣṇa directs a shattering criticism on the sacrificial cult in *Gīta* 2.42-44. It occurs also in a mild form in Verses 20

and 21 of this chapter also. Vedic ritualism was elaborate, requiring meticulous performance with diverse ingredients. Its object was heavenly felicities. It was open only to Kṣatriyas and Brāhmanas. Both women and members of non-Brāhmanical classes were excluded from it.

Now the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, which Kṛṣṇa proclaimed, though it did not rebel against Vedic ritualism, has characteristics of a very different nature. Its important features are: (1) Faith in the One Supreme Spirit, called Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa, Mahāviṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa etc., and adoration of Him with devotion.

(2) In this adoration rituals and ingredients are very subordinate. In this very chapter Kṛṣṇa says: "Leaves, flowers, water etc. given to Me with love and dedication, I consume with supreme satisfaction" (Gīta IX. 28). In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, another great text of the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, it is said, "If a man disregards and persecutes fellow beings, but worships Me in images with numerous rituals and rich offerings, I am not at all pleased with him for proffering such worship." (Bh. III 29.24). Thus worship is effective not by the complexity of its rituals and the elaborateness of ingredients and offerings, but by devotion and by service of fellow beings done as part of worship.

(3) Highest worship, according to the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, consists in the total surrender of all the fruits of actions and finally even the sense of agency to Him. So says the *Bhāgavata*, "Whatever man does by the body, by mind, by Buddhi, and by the senses according to his nature (i.e. due to the prompting of the tendencies acquired by his Karma), let all that be dedicated to the Supreme Being" (Bh. XI. 2.36).

Here, in this very chapter, the Gīta too says: "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you give away in charity, whatever austerity you perform—do all that as offering unto Me" (9-27). In the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, unlike in Vedic ritualism, Karma is not so much performance of rituals as performance of one's duties in a spirit of dedication. Thus the Gīta says: "By making all one's actions constituting one's duty, an offering to Him, from whom the world has come and by whom it is pervaded, man attains perfection" (Gīta 18.46).

In the full-fledged description of the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, as we get it in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, a spiritual discipline of a very wide scope is presented. It has nine steps: *Śravaṇa* (hearing), *Kīrtana* (hymning), *Smarāṇa* (remembering), *Pādaseva* (service), *Arcana* (worship), *Vandana* (saluting all as the tabernacles of God), *Dāśya* (cultivating the attitude of the servant of God), *Sakhya* (comradeship with Him), *Ātmanivedana* (complete self-surrender). The *Gītā* takes into account mainly *Padaseva* (*Pāda* being taken as manifestation of the Supreme Being as the world), and *Ātmani-vedana*. We have to take the others as included in these two.

(4) The *Bhāgavata Dharma* is open to all, including women and the outcastes, unlike the Vedic sacrificial rites, which are open only to men of the twice born *Varnas* (*Dvijas*). The *Gītā* openly declares: "Even a confirmed sinner, if he worships Me with unwavering faith and devotion, must verily be considered as righteous; for he has taken the right resolve.... O son of Prithā! Taking refuge in Me, women, *Vaiśyas*, *Śūdras*, and likewise even men of inferior birth attain to the highest spiritual goal." (9.30 & 33).

(5) In the Vedic way of life those who lost faith in the enjoyments offered by the sacrificial cults took to *Karma-sannyāsa* or abandonment of all ritualistic works, and became ascetics practising the meditative life prescribed by the *Upaniṣads*. It is what is described in the *Gītā* as *Sāṃkhya* and is more popularly known as *Jñāna Yoga*, the way of knowledge. In the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, there is no abandonment of works. Work discharged as offering to the Divine is sanctifying and is always to be done. Says the *Gītā*: "Worship, charity, austerity etc. should not be abandoned. They should be performed. They purify the wise. They have to be done without attachment and desire for their merits. This is My firm and final word on the question." (18.5 & 6). This applies to those who follow the *Bhāgavata Dharma*.

By showing this contrast between the Vedic sacrificial religion and the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, it is not meant that the *Gītā* decries the one and accepts only the other. While it criticises desire-prompted ritualism, it accepts its abandonment at a mature stage and the adoption of the contemplative and workless way of *Jñāna Yoga* or the *Sāṃkhya*, as it is called here. (*Gītā* 6.3). But it accepts

equally the validity of the *Bhūgavata Dharma* as a self-sufficient discipline taking the aspirant to the highest goal, which is the goal also of one following the discipline of Jñāna.

According to the Gīta, Jñāna as well as Bhakti discipline is each in itself self-sufficient, and can take an aspirant to the highest. Karma has however no place in the Jñāna discipline, except in the early stages of a man's spiritual life; but in Bhakti, dedicated Karma is a part of its practice, and there is no opposition between the two. Dedicated Karma can also become the main discipline with Bhakti as an aid and directive force. Great men of action with a spiritual background are examples of this. Yoga, as a scientific system of concentration, can be an aid in both Bhakti and Jñāna. But just as Karma can be the main discipline, so Yoga too can be the main form of discipline, with Bhakti and Jñāna as the directive forces. Chapter 6 of the Gīta is devoted to Yoga in this sense as the main discipline.

In fact it is unpsychological to make a water-tight compartmentalization of these four Yogas. These Yogas are based upon the three aspects of the human mind—the intellectual, the emotional and the volitional. Jñāna Yoga is essentially intellectual, Bhakti Yoga emotional, and Karma and Yoga volitional. The last requires some explanation. In Yoga, or to be more accurate, in Rāja Yoga, which is the science of concentration, what is done is to use the will power to make the mind one-pointed. Will is here used for an inward purpose. In Karma Yoga also the application of will is the main feature of the discipline, but it takes an external direction.

Now thinking, feeling and willing, which are the faculties of the human mind on which these Yogas are based, do not exist in the human mind in isolation from one another. The human mind is a whole, constituted of these faculties, and so all these faculties have in some way or other to enter into all these Yogas. The *Vicāra* or the discriminative process has to be supported by the whole of the chastened emotional and volitional powers of the mind, if the mind were to keep awake and dynamic instead of lapsing into dullness and sleep. In the Bhakti discipline, if emotion is not supported by thought and volition, an understanding of one's true relationship with the Divine activated by will power, it will

degenerate into vapid sentimentalism or into a dull routine of procedures. So also Karma Yoga, if it degenerates into mere Karma, will become the restless activity of a busy-body, without raising the moral and spiritual stature of the man concerned. Yoga as practice of concentration will become mere psychism and pursuit of occult powers, unless it has a spiritual objective. Thus it will be seen that none of these four disciplines can stand as water-tight compartments. What is meant by differentiating them into four is to put the stress on one or the other of the mental faculties on which these disciplines rest. The Gīta accepts all these disciplines, and gives equal importance to all, though Jñāna and Bhakti are shown as the two main and dominant disciplines.

2. *Vr. 4*: The Supreme Being is called the Unmanifested Being, because He is invisible or unknown to man in ignorance, though in truth everything is included in Him and there is nothing beside Him. He is described as pervading everything; but pervading does not mean that some parts of Him are contained and imprisoned within objects. To ward off such misconception, it is said that though He is pervading all objects, they are in Him and are supported by Him and not vice versa. All things exist in His Sankalpa or will. So they all depend on Him but not He on them. He sustains them all from within and without but He is not contained by them or limited by them. This is so because He is Spirit and not a material substance. The impossible is possible for His mysterious power to accomplish, as is stated in the next verse—"See My Yoga or mysterious Power."

3. *Vr. 5*: What is accomplished by His Yoga or Yoga-Māyā (mysterious power) is further explained here as follows: He is the source and support of all existence, but He has no contact with them i.e. they do not limit or affect Him in anyway, nor is He dependent on them. But all objects are given their status as existent entities because of His will. But for Him they would have had no existence, but He is self-existent. Nor does their existence affect His infinity in any way. The Lord uses the word *Mamātmā*—My Ātma—only for purpose of human understanding. He is really 'egoless' unlike Jīvas, but still all this is accomplished by His Power.

4. *Vr. 6*: An illustration, however inadequate, is given to

explain this Divine mystery. The atmosphere is existing in Ākāśa, without limiting or in any way affecting the Ākāśa. Ākāśa, being a much more subtle medium, is able to sustain a grosser entity, namely, atmosphere, without itself being affected by the gross entity. The subtlest of all entities is the Lord, and He is therefore not in the least affected by the manifestation. But this example is meant only to give an approximate idea by showing how a subtle entity can contain and pervade something more gross. But the true explanation is only in the Lord's mysterious Power, Māyā or Yoga-Māyā, which makes Him transcend laws applicable to material entities, rendering it possible for him to be both the material and the efficient cause of the world-manifestation outside, His Infinity and Lordship being not affected in the least thereby.

5. *Vr.7*: The *Kalpa* (manifestation) and *Pralaya* (dissolution) have been explained at length in Note 3 of the previous chapter. The Lord's creative activity is an eternal cyclic process of *Kalpas* and *Pralayas*, one alternating with the other just like day and night.

6. *Vr.9*: The use of *udāsīnavad*—like or as if unconcerned—is significant. 'Unconcernedness' is only in being non-attached, but it does not preclude Him from loving those who are truly devoted to Him. The Lord's love for the devotee is neither partiality nor attachment, as in the case of worldly love. For there is in Him no self-centredness, and His love goes to all who seek Him with devotion. He is open to all who choose to seek Him.

7. *Vrs.11-12*: The reference here may be to God as the Divine Incarnate and to the reason for men's failure to recognise Him. But this topic has been discussed in chapter four 7 to 9 (cf. Note 1) and in chapter seven 24 to 25 (cf. Notes 7 and 8). So this may be a reference to men not recognising that the Divine is immanent in all beings, and for this reason living a self-centred life without any real heartfelt faith in the Divine at all, but professing such faith only hypocritically. The worship of such people who oppress God in man but worship Him in images with elaborate rituals is condemned in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. This may as well be a general condemnation of the atheistic attitude towards life. A man who does not accept God, a spiritual background for the world, will not accept an eternal spiritual principle in man too. He will look upon man as a mere body-mind, and his attitude

towards life will be formed on that belief. He can be only a pure self-centred materialist. The attitude and ways of life of such persons are described as *Rākṣasi* and *Āsurī* or demoniac in verse 12, i.e., the next verse.

8. *Vr.13*: The *Gītā* seems to recognise some kind of a basic divergence in the nature of people as *Daivī-prakṛti* and *Āsurī-prakṛti*, the divine and the demoniac. The characteristics and the ways of life of these two types are more elaborately described in chapter 16.

According to some philosophers, who accept the doctrine of *Tāratamya*, or basic contrast in the nature of *Jīvas* and the course their life takes, the *Daivī* type evolves spiritually till they obtain liberation, while the *Āsurī* type goes down deeper and deeper into worldly entanglement. They become *Nityasamsārīs*—permanent worldlings.

But it is pointed out that the spirit in man is essentially Divine. The *Gītā* says: "A particle of mine has become a *Jīva* in the world of beings" (Ch. 15. 7). The *Jīva* cannot lose that basic nature. So the two character types must have developed in the course of evolution due to their Karma. Repeated performance of good and evil acts must have produced what appears to be the basic tendencies.

Included in the Lord's Power or *Māyā*, are two tendencies working in opposite directions. These tendencies are *Vidyā* (enlightenment), which works towards the liberation of the soul, and *Avidyā* (ignorance) which leads to more and more of worldly bondage of the *Jīva*. Moral and pious actions bring one more and more under the influence of *Vidyā*, and immoral and sensuous indulgences bring him more and more into the sphere of *Avidyā*. Spiritual growth and spiritual degeneration accrue to the *Jīva* from his own actions under the influence of the one or the other of these aspects of *Māyā*. See also Note 3 on verse 15 of the 7th chapter.

9. *Vr.14*: In this verse *Kīrtana* hymning and *Vandanam* (saluting), two of the nine-pronged *Bhakti* discipline, are added to worship. See for details Note 1 on verse 2 of this Chapter.

10. *Vr.15*: Jñāna-Yajña is not mere study of scriptures or lecturing on spiritual themes. Coming as it does immediately after reference to Kīrtana and Vandana i.e. hymning and saluting all as the temple of the Lord—the Jñāna described here must be the attitudes of devotion born of knowledge or Jñāna of one's relationship with the Divine. For, an attitude towards God can be maintained only on an understanding of one's relationship with Him. These attitudes are given in Bhakti disciplines as Dāśya (servitude), Sakhya (intimacy of comradeship) and Ātmanivedana (whole-hearted self-surrender). Unless one knows, or has an awareness of, how one is related to the Supreme Being, love of Him cannot become firm and constant. An awareness of one's closeness to Him alone can produce that intimacy contemplated in Sakhya and Ātmanivedana. Thus Jñāna supports Bhakti, and Bhakti deepens Jñāna. The Gīta therefore says: "By Bhakti one comes to know Me—who I am and how great I am" Ch. 18.55). To separate them and make them independent disciplines or one subservient to the other may be correct in the lower stages of spiritual development. But finally they are mutual supports and form the obverse and reverse of the same coin. So it is appropriate to term the attitudes of Bhakti as Jñāna-Yajña.

The forms of Jñāna-Yajña here referred to are three—those based on unity (*ekatva*), separateness (*prthaktva*), and multiplicity (*bahudhā*). Bhakti of the *ekatva* type is based on the realisation of the Jīva's oneness with Him, and such Bhakti is described as *svasvarūpānusandhānam*—uniting with what is one's own pristine nature. Bhakti of the *Prthaktva* type is to know Him as the Father and Master of all. Adoring Him as Friend or Husband too will come under this. To adore Him in multiplicity (*bahudhā*) can mean, to know that He is immanent in all beings, and do service to all beings with that attitude in mind. It is the Sevādharmā as adumbrated by Swami Vivekananda, in which Bhakti takes the form of Karma Yoga. This part of the passage is also interpreted as the worship of many deities like Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Incarnations, the Divine Mother in various aspects etc., where worship is done with the understanding that it is the one Supreme Being who has manifested as all these Deities and that it is He who is worshipped through them all. Worship with such understanding is a part of Bhakti. Thus Jñāna-Yajña includes all forms of adoration with understanding.

11. *Vrs.16-18* These verses seem to explain what is meant by calling the Lord as *Viśvatomukham*—All-inclusive Whole. As there is nothing outside Him, all entities included in the Universe are adjuncts or instruments or forms of His, through which He functions in the Cosmic Play. So also all functions which are being fulfilled by different powers and beings are really the stirrings of His will. His many-sided relationship with the world is set forth in these verses.

12. *Vr.19*: *Sat* and *Asat*, apart from the usual meaning, 'being' and 'non-being', are used in many other senses in the Hindu scriptures. In the well-known Vedic prayer '*Asato ma sad gamaya ... mrityor ma amṛtam gamaya*', *Asat* (Non-being) is put in apposition with Death and *Sat* (Being) with Immortality. Here we may exclude this meaning, as *Amṛta* and *Mṛtyu* are mentioned separately just earlier in this very Verse 19. Besides, the words are connected by the conjunction 'and', and are not in apposition. So the words can be interpreted as done in other places: *Sat* is the manifested or gross condition, and *Asat*, the unmanifested and subtle causal condition. In this context also the same may be the meaning of the two words.

It is interesting to note that in 11.87 Arjuna describes the Lord as *tvam akṣaram sad asad tat-param yat*—Thou art that Imperishable which is both *sat* and *asat* (being and non-being) and what is beyond both these. In 13.12 Brahman is described as *na sat tan n'āsat*—neither Being nor Non-being.

13. *Vrs.20-21*: In these verses is brought out the clear-cut distinction between attaining heaven and attaining salvation in the eschatology based on Hindu scriptures. In other religions heaven or paradise is the final destiny of all pious believers. But in Vedic religion heaven is just a state like our life on earth, only providing enjoyments of greater refinement as a reward for Vedic rituals performed and charities done with their fruits in view. Just like money put in the bank, these merits are exhausted by enjoyment, and when their credit of merits is exhausted, those *Jīvas* have to come back to the earth to acquire new merits and have more enjoyments after the end of their earthly life. This *Samsāra* or repetitive process of birth and death offering enjoyments and sufferings, is the lot of people who live with bodily fulfilments as their aim

in life. In contrast to these pseudo-religionists, who are only worldlings in the garb of orthodoxy, are the real lovers of God who live a holy life of surrender to God and service of His creatures without praying for any reward. They attain liberation (Mukti) or freedom from Samsāra. For further information on these two kinds of attainments, reference may be made to Note 5 in chapter 8.

14. *Vr.22*: In contrast to the pseudo-religionists, who are really mere worldlings, the Lord speaks of true devotees termed here as *ananyāḥ*, a very highly suggestive term. In a pure Advaitic sense it can mean—those who do not think of Him as different from their real Self. In a purely devotional sense it can mean—those who love Him, looking upon Him, the Supreme Being, as their ‘own’, and not as a strange Power to be propitiated for favours. There is greater appropriateness in the latter, because what is being expounded is the pure devotional Gospel of the *Bhāgavatas*. This will look justified also, if it is seen that in the very next verse the Lord speaks of *anya devatā bhaktāḥ* — devotees of other Deities whom they invoke for favours. *Anyā* means a ‘stranger’, and *Ananyāḥ*, its opposite, is therefore “one’s own”. It indicates intimacy and unselfish love.

These are the words of assurance that the Lord gives to true devotees. In the midst of their devotional pre-occupations, they may neglect to preserve what they have (*Kṣemam*) or worldly interests. Absorbed in His service they may not care for their future interests (*Yoga*), consisting in liberation or *Mokṣa*. But the Lord of Love assures that He Himself will see to it that their interests in these respects are secured. These devotees never pray to the Lord for anything, even for liberation. They only love Him and serve Him and forget everything about themselves. They look upon the Lord as their ‘own’, and they have no selfish and extraneous interests in adoring Him, including salvation. Love is the only motive power.

15. *Vrs.23—25*: ‘Contrary to injunctions’ means contrary to the principles of the devotional scriptures. Devotional scriptures inculcate the worship of the Supreme Being who may be looked upon as a Person, but not as an individual. The Deities are His manifestations for cosmic purposes. If people worship them for particular purposes, without an understanding that only

He, the Supreme Being, is worshipped through them, it becomes a kind of idolatry—worshipping something to whom worship is not due. They may be propitiated with offerings, but not adored and worshipped. These deities are His Kalas or powers conceived in separation from Him. People who are worldly-minded and who go to religion only for worldly fulfilments, think that propitiating deities is an easy way of gaining their ends. But the Lord has said in Chapter 7.18 that His pure devotees also—the suffering, the enquirers, the boon-seekers, and the knowing ones—can all approach Him directly. He considers them too as noble (*udārāḥ*). There is however this great difference. The propitiation of deities is bound by rituals and requires elaborate offerings. If the propitiating is not done according to the ritualistic codes, it may be even counter-productive. But the worship of the Lord is simple. As stated in 9.26 the ingredients offered may even be such common things as leaf, water, fruit, etc. But the offering must be done with pure love and submission to His will. This is a commodity that the devotees of deities lack. They are commercial in their outlook. In spite of all the difficulties and expenses undergone, the result got by their worship is temporary. The devotees of deities fall from their attainments in course of time, but the devotees of the God of Love are liberated. Note 6 in Chapter 7 may also be read in this connection.

16. *Vr.26*: The simplicity of devotional worship should not be understood as encouragement of miserliness. It is only to point out the dominance of devotion, unlike in ritualistic worship of deities where punctiliousness and wealth of offerings count. A true devotee will offer the best he can procure and not stint in the matter. Liberal gifts to holy men and the poor also form an important part of devotional worship. External worship of this kind is very important in the early stages of devotional life. Meditation is too abstract for beginners. Prayer without an object before one is also vague. But if there is an image or symbol before one to pray to and to worship, it gives a sense of realism to the ordinary man. He feels that some concrete communion is done. Without realising this, there are intellectuals who scorn external worship without themselves being fit for anything better.

17. *Vrs.27-28*: External worship is symbolic. The true and the highest worship that the *Bhāgavata Dharma* inculcates is

total offering of oneself, one's possessions, and one's actions and even the sense of agency to Him. Such total offering to God is the real renunciation, and a person who does so is a real Sannyāsīn, as declared in the next verse. It is also declared in this and the next verse that in the discipline of Bhakti, abandonment of work means this kind of renunciation and not of all external actions. Such renunciation leads one to the highest. He need not give up his adherence to the nine disciplines of Bhakti as something inferior and take to the so-called *jñāna-niṣṭa* for enlightenment. The Lord of Love bestows it on Him by His grace.

18. *Vr.29*: This is the answer to the question: Is God then partial towards His devotees as against those who do not adore Him? Among worldly men of high position such an invidious attitude is common. Those who flatter them are rewarded and those who do not do so are excluded from favour. Is God also like that? This criticism is answered here. Those who adore Him approach close to Him and dwell in Him, and therefore participate in His blissful nature, whereas the others ignorantly or deliberately exclude themselves from Him and become exclusively interested in worldly life with its inevitable consequences. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* illustrates this point by describing God as *Kalpataru-svabhāvaḥ*—comparable to the wish-yielding tree of heaven. Those who go under the tree and pray are rewarded. Those who exclude themselves from it fail to get those blessings due to their own fault. A question may now arise: "Is God then simply a passive element, just like beauties of Nature? Is He not responsive to the devotee's attitude? Does not the devotee get any active help from Him?" Sri Ramakrishna answers this declaring that if the devotee takes two steps towards Him, He takes ten steps to the devotee. A devotee will find from experience that God's grace works on him in a hundred ways without his actually knowing it.

19. *Vrs.30-32*: These verses breathe the extreme liberalism of the *Bhāgavata Dharma* in contrast to the Vedic ritualism and philosophy, to which only the twice born classes were considered eligible according to the orthodox traditions of the Mīmāṃsakas or Vedic savants. Bhakti discipline, however, is for all without any consideration of birth, sex or social status, and the Gīta holds that through that discipline, one can reach the highest.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* goes a step still further. A sinner even, is not without hope. The way is open even for him to receive the grace of the Lord, be purified and saved. That way consists in worshipping the Lord with unwavering faith and devotion (*ananya-bhakti*). Sometimes a sectarian interpretation is given to this expression as worshipping no other deity than Kṛṣṇa. Such a meaning is not consistent with the spirit of the Gīta and is to be rejected. If that interpretation is accepted, it will be a doctrine akin to the Christian doctrine of 'No salvation except through Christ'.

Chapter X

विभूतियोगः

MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVINE GLORIES

SUMMARY

Contemplation on Divine Excellences: (1-11) As an aid to devotion and self-surrender, the Lord expounds the Divine majesties and excellences, by contemplating on which the devotional mood is reinforced. The Lord says to Arjuna: No person, however great, knows Me; for I pre-exist all. Knowing Me as the unoriginated and eternal Lord of all, man becomes sinless and free from delusions. All the higher faculties of man are but a faint reflection of My excellences. All great men, saints and saviours, are indeed projections of My thought. To contemplate on Me as the source of all this world-manifestation, to recognise My essence in all that is glorious and impressive, is the way to get thrilled with the devotional experience and attain perpetual communion with Me. To those whose very vital energy is drawn to Me through devotion, I bring the illumination of spiritual insight: I light within them the lamp of wisdom, revealing Myself as the Soul of their soul.

The Vibhūti: (12-42) Moved by utter reverence springing from an apprehension of the divine mystery, Arjuna now wants to know about the Bhagavān's glorious manifestations in life and in Nature, and the Lord lists some of them for the edification of Arjuna. He says: I am what manifests as the Self in all beings. Among Adityas, I am Viṣṇu; among luminaries, the Sun; among the Maruts, Marīci; among the stars, the moon; among the Vedas, Sāma; among the Devas, Indra; among the senses, the mind; in living creatures, consciousness; among mountains, Meru;

among the priests, Bṛhaspati; among the commanders, Skanda; among water reservoirs, the ocean; among Maharṣis, Bhṛgu; among sounds, Oṃkāra; among Yajñas, Japa Yajña; among immobile entities, the Himālaya; among trees, the Asvattha (fig-tree); among Devarṣis, Nārada; among Gandharvas, Citraratha; among perfected beings, Kapila; among horses, Uccaiśravas; among elephants, Airāvata; among men, the king; among weapons, the thunderbolt; among cows, the Kāmadhenu; among progenitors, Cupid; among serpents, Vāsuki; among Nāgas, Ananta; among aquatic residents, Varuṇa; among Pitṛs, Aryamā; among enforcers, Yama; among Daityas, Prahlāda; among measuring agents, Time; among animals, the lion; among birds, Garuḍa; among the fish, Makara; among rivers, the Gaṅga; among forms of knowledge, the knowledge of the Self; among letters, the letter A; among compound word-formations, the Dvandva form; among destroyers, death; among months, the Mārgaśīrṣa; among seasons, spring; among deceitful ways, the game of dice; of the powerful, their power; of the meritorious, their virtues; among the Vṛṣṇis, Kṛṣṇa; among the Pāṇḍavas, Arjuna; among sages, Vyāsa; among poets, Śukra; in the disciplinarians, the sense of discipline; among the factors for success, justice; in the knowing ones, knowledge—in short I am the seed of everything, and without Me nothing can exist. There is no end to My manifestations. Wherever you see anything powerful, good and glorious, know that to be a manifestation of an atom of My Power. But why all these details! Suffice for you to understand that with an atom of My being, I pervade and sustain everything.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥ १ ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca:

Bhūya eva mahā-bāho śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ ।

yat te'haṁ prīyamāṇāya vakṣyāmi hita-kāmyayā //1//

Mahābāho : O mighty armed! *prīyamāṇāya te* : to you who are beloved *hitakāmyayā* : desirous of your good *yat* : what me :

my *paramam vacaḥ* : words on the Supreme Truth, *aham* : I
vakṣyāmi : shall declare, *bhūyah eva* : again *śṛṇu* : hear.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Hear again, O mighty armed one, My words on the Supreme Truth. Desirous of your good, I want to declare it to you, who are so beloved of Me.

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।
 अहमादिहि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥ 2 ॥

Na me viduḥ sura-gaṇāḥ prabhavam na maharṣayaḥ
aham ādir hi devānāṁ maharṣīṇāṁ ca sarvaśaḥ //2//

Me : My *prabhavam* : origin *suragaṇāḥ* : hosts of gods *na viduḥ* : do not know; *maharṣayaḥ* : Maharṣis *na* : nor; *hi* : for *aham* : I *devānāṁ* : of the Devas *maharṣīṇām* : of the Maharṣis (great sages) *ca* : and *sarvaśaḥ* : to all *ādiḥ* : origin.

2. Neither the hosts of gods nor Maharṣis (great sages) know my origin, for I am Myself the origin of all those gods and great sages.

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
 असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ 3 ॥

Yo mām ajam anādim ca veti loka-mah'eśvaram /
asammūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate //3//

Yaḥ : Who *mām* : Me *anādim* : without beginning *ajam* : unborn *lokamaheśvaram* : the Master of all the worlds *ca* : and *veti* : knows; *martyeṣu* : among mortals *asammūḍhaḥ* : undeluded, *saḥ* : he *sarva pāpaiḥ* : from all sins *pramucyate* : is released.

3. He who knows Me as the beginningless, the unborn and the Master of the worlds—he among mortals becomes undeluded, and he is freed from all sins.

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।

सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो मयं चाभयमेव च ॥ 4 ॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।

भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥ 5 ॥

*Buddhir jñānam asammohaḥ kṣamā satyam damaḥ śamaḥ /
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavo'bhāvo bhayaṁ c'ābhayaṁ eva ca ||4||*

*Ahimsā samatā tuṣṭis tapo dānaṁ yaśo'yaśaḥ /
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ matta eva prthag-vidhāḥ ||5||*

Buddhiḥ : Intelligence *jñānam* : knowledge *asammohaḥ* : sanity
kṣamā : patience *satyam* : truth *damaḥ* : sense control *śamaḥ* :
mind control *sukham* : pleasure *duḥkham* : pain *bhavaḥ* : birth
abhāvaḥ : death *bhayaṁ* : fear *ābhayaṁ* : fearlessness *eva* : also
ca : and *ahimsā* : non-injury *samatā* : same-sightedness *tuṣṭiḥ* :
contentment *tapāḥ* : austerity *dānam* : benevolent disposition *yaśaḥ* :
fame *ayaśaḥ* : obloquy *bhūtānām* : of beings *prthag-vidhāḥ* : diverse
bhāvāḥ : expressions *matta eva* : from Me alone *bhavanti* : arise.

4-5. Intelligence, knowledge, sanity, patience, truth, sense-control, mind-control, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear and also fearlessness; non-injury, same-sightedness, contentment, austerity, benevolence, fame and obloquy—all these diverse modes of the mind seen in all beings proceed from Me alone, their ultimate sanctioner.

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।

मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥ 6 ॥

*Maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve catvāro manavas tathā /
mad-bhāvā mānasā jātā yeṣāṁ loka imāḥ prajāḥ ||6||*

Sapta : Seven *maharṣayaḥ* : great sages *pūrve* : more ancient *catvāro* :
the four sages *tathā* : in the same way *Manavaḥ* : Manus *matbhāvāḥ* :
are my emanations, *mānasāḥ jātāḥ* : born of my mind. *Loke* : In the
world *imāḥ* : all these *prajāḥ* : beings *yeṣāṁ jātāḥ* : from whom
were born.

6. The seven great sages (beginning with Marīci) as also the four earlier ones like Sanaka, and the rest and the Manus likewise are My emanations, being projections of my thought. All this race of men is their progeny.

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
सोऽविकल्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥ 7 ॥

Etām vibhūtim yogam ca mama yo veti tattvataḥ /
so'vikalpena yogena yujyate n'ātra saṁśayaḥ //7//

Mama : My *etam* : above-mentioned *vibhūtim* : manifestation of Divine majesties *yogam* : powers *ca* : and *yaḥ* : who *tattvataḥ* : in their true nature *veti* : understands, *saḥ* : he *avikalpena yogena* : in steady and unfaltering communion *yujyate* : unites with; *atra* : about this *na saṁśayaḥ* : there is no doubt.

7. He who knows the truth about this manifestation of My Divine majesties and about My power, gets united with Me in steady and unfaltering communion. There is no doubt about this.

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ 8 ॥

Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate /
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ //8//

Aham : I *sarvasya* : of all *prabhavaḥ* : source, *mattaḥ* : from me *sarvaṁ* : all *pravartate* : go forth, *iti* : thus *matvā* : knowing *budhāḥ* : the wise *bhāvasamanvitāḥ* : becoming ecstatic with devotion *mām* : Me *bhajante* : worship.

8. I am the source of all things, from Me all these go forth—knowing thus the wise ones worship Me, being filled with ecstatic devotional fervour.

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।

कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ 9 ॥

*Mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam /
kathayantaś ca mām nityaṁ tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca* //9//

Maccittāḥ : With minds engrossed in Me *madgataprāṇāḥ* : with their vital energies deeply involved in Me *parasparam* : mutually *bodhayantaḥ* : enlightening *kathayantaḥ* : conversing *ca* : and *nityam* : ever *tuṣyanti* : feel contented *ramanti* : feel delighted *ca* : and.

9. With their minds engrossed and their vital energies deeply involved in Me, they are ever contented and delighted by mutually conversing about Me and enlightening each other thereby.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ 10 ॥

*Teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam /
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te* //10//

Yena : By which *te* : they *mām* : Me *upayānti* : attain to *taṁ* : that *buddhiyogam* : intellectual intuition or intuitive understanding *satatayuktānām* : ever-steadfast in spiritual communion *prītipūrvakam* : with delight *bhajatām* : serving *teṣam* : to them *dadāmi* : give.

10. To those who serve Me with delight and are ever steadfast in spiritual communion, I bestow intuitive understanding by means of which they come to Me.¹

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ 11 ॥

*Teṣāṁ ev'ānukamp'ārtham aham ajñāna-jam tamaḥ /
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā* //11//

Teṣām : For them *anukampārtham* : out of compassion *eva* : sheer
aham : I *ātmabhāvasthaḥ* : residing as the innermost self *ajñānam*
tamaḥ : darkness born of ignorance *bhāsvatā* : brilliant *jñānadīpena* :
 by the lamp of wisdom *nāśayāmi* : destroy.

11. Out of sheer compassion for them, residing within as their innermost self, I destroy the darkness born of ignorance in them by the brilliant lamp of wisdom.²

अर्जुन उवाच

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।
 पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥ 12 ॥

आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्निरदस्तथा ।
 असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ 13 ॥

Arjuna uvāca :

Param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān /
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam ādi-devam ajaṁ vibhum //12//

Āhus tvām ṛṣayaḥ sarve deva'rṣir Nāradas tathā /
Asito Devalo Vyāsaḥ svayaṁ c'aiva bravīṣi me //13//

Param brahma : Supreme Brahman *param dhāma* : supreme
 Abode *paramaṁ* : supreme *pavitraṁ* : purifier (the Holy) *bhavān* :
 Thou art. *Tvam* : Thou *śāśvataṁ* : eternal *divyam* : divine *ādidevam* :
 first among the Devas *ajaṁ* : unborn *vibhum* : all-pervading *puru-*
ṣam : Person *sarve* : all *ṛṣayaḥ* : Rishis *āhuḥ* : proclaim. *Tathā* :
 Similarly *devarṣiḥ* : Rishi among the Devas *Nāradaḥ* : Nārada
Asitaḥ : Asita *Devalaḥ* : Devala *Vyāsaḥ* : Vyāsa (*āhuḥ* : pro-
 claim); *svayaṁ ca* : and Thyself *eva* : too *me* : to me *bravīṣi* :
 sayest.

Arjuna said :

12-13. Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode, the utterly Holy. Thou art the eternal divine Person—the birthless and all-pervading Divinity supreme. All the Rishis

proclaim this—the divine sage Nārada as also Asita, Devala and Vyāsa; Thou Thyself too dost tell Me the same.

सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।

न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥ 14 ॥

Sarvam etad ṛtaṁ manye yan mām vadasi Keśava /
nahi te bhagavan vyaktiṁ vidur devā na dānavāḥ //14//

Keśava : O Keśava! *mām* : to me *yat* : what *vadasi* : Thou sayest, *etat* : that *sarvam* : all *ṛtam* : as true *manye* : I deem. *Bhagavan* : O Lord *te vyaktiṁ* : Thy manifestation *devāḥ* : The Devas *na viduḥ* : do not know *hi* : indeed, *dānavāḥ* : Dānavas *na* : not.

14. O Keśava! Whatever Thou hast told me, I deem as true. Verily, O Lord, neither the Devas nor the Dānavas know what Thy manifestations are.

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।

भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥ 15 ॥

Svyam ev' ātman' ātmānaṁ vettha tvam Puruṣottama /
bhūta-bhāvana bhūt'eśa deva-deva jagat-pate //15//

Puruṣottama : O Thou the highest of all beings! *bhūtabhāvana* : O Creator of all! *bhūteśa* : O Lord of all! *deva deva* : O God of gods! *jagatpate* : O ruler of the worlds! *tvam* : Thou *eva* : alone *svayam* : Thyself *ātmānam* : Thyself *ātmanā* : by Thyself *vettha* : knowest.

15. O Thou the highest of all beings! O Creator of all! O Lord of all! O God of gods! O Ruler of the world! Thou art known only to Thyself through self-intuition.

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।

यामिद्विभूतिमिलोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥ 16 ॥

Vaktum arhasy aśeṣeṇa divyā hy ātma-vibhūtayāḥ /
yābhir vibhūtibhir lokān imāns tvam vyāpya tiṣṭhasi //16//

Yābhiḥ : By which *vibhūtibhiḥ* : manifestations of glory *imān* : these *lokān* : worlds *vyāpya* : pervading *tiṣṭhasi* : abidest (in them), *divyam* : divine *ātmavibhūṭayaḥ* : manifestations of the glory of Thyself *aśeṣena* : in entirety *tvam* : Thou *vaktum arhasi* : shouldst tell *hi* : verily.

16. Deign to speak to me in entirety of those divine manifestations of Thy glory, whereby, pervading all these worlds, Thou abidest in them and beyond.

कथं विद्यामहं योगिस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥ 17 ॥

Katham vidyām aham yogims tvām sadā paricintayan /
keṣu-keṣu ca bhāveṣu cintyo'si bhagavan mayā //17//

Yogin : O Yogin! *aham* : I *katham* : how *sadā* : always *paricintayan* : meditating *tvām* : Thee *vidyām* : may know. *Bhagavan* : O Lord! *keṣu keṣu* : in what all *bhāveṣu* : aspects *ca* : and *mayā* : by me *cintyaḥ* : to be contemplated *tvam* : Thou *asi* : art.

17. How am I to know Thee, O Yogin, through constant meditation? In what all aspects shouldst Thou be contemplated upon by me, O Lord?

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विमूर्तिं च जनार्दन ।
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥ 18 ॥

Vistareṇ'ātmāno yogam vibhūtim ca Janārdana /
bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptir hi śṛṇvato n'āsti me'mṛtam //18//

Janārdana : O Janārdana! *ātmanaḥ* : Thy own *yogam* : Yogic power *vibhūtim* : majesty *ca* : and *vistareṇa* : in detail *bhūyaḥ* : again *kathaya* : speak of. *Hi* : For *amṛtam* : nectarine words *śṛṇvataḥ me* : to me who am hearing *tṛptiḥ* : satiation *na asti* : does not exist.

18. O Janārdana! Tell me again and again of Thy divine powers and majesties; for I am ever eager to hear more and more of Thy nectarine words.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।

प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥ 19 ॥

Śri Bhagavān uvāca:

*Hanta te kathayiṣyāmi divyā hy ātma-vibhūtayāḥ /
prādhānyataḥ Kuru-śreṣṭha n'āstyanto vistarasya me //19//*

Hanta : Behold *Kuruśreṣṭha* : O the best of the Kurus! *divyāḥ* : divine *ātmavibhūtayāḥ* : self-manifestations *prādhānyataḥ* : according to their importance *te* : to you *kathayiṣyāmi* : I shall tell; *hi* : for *vistarasya* : of the details *antaḥ* : end *na asti* : is not.

The Blessed Lord said:

19. Behold, O best of the Kurus! I shall declare unto you what My divine self-manifestations are; but I shall mention only the chief of them. For, there is no end to their details.³

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ 20 ॥

*Aham ātmā Guḍākeśa sarva-bhūt'āśaya-sthitaḥ /
aham ādiś ca madhyam ca bhūtānām anta eva ca //20//*

Guḍākeśa : O conqueror of sleep *sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ* : residing in the heart of every being *ātmā* : the self *aham* : I am, *bhūtānām* : of all beings *ādiḥ* : beginning *ca* : and *madhyam* : middle (of life-span) *ca* : and *antaḥ* : end *ca* : and *aham* : I *eva* : also.

20. O Arjuna! I am the Self residing in the heart of every being. I am their beginning, their life-span, and their end.

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।

मरीचिमरुतामसि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥ 21 ॥

*Ādityānām aham Viṣṇur jyotiṣāṃ ravir amśumān /
Marīcir Marutām asmi nakṣatrāṇām aham śaśi //21//*

Ādityānām : Of *Ādityas* *Viṣṇuḥ* : *Viṣṇu aham* : I am, *jyotiṣām* among luminaries *aṁśumān* : radiant *raviḥ* : sun, *marutām* : among the Maruts (winds) *Marīciḥ* : *Marīci asmi* : I am, *nakṣatrāṇām* : among the asterisms *śaśī* : moon *aham* : I am.

21. Of the twelve *Ādityas* (suns), I am *Viṣṇu*; among the luminaries I am the radiant sun; among the seven Maruts (winds) I am *Marīci*; and of the *Nakṣatras* (asterisms), I am the moon.

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।

इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥ 22 ॥

Vedānām sāma-vedo'smi devānām asmi Vāsavaḥ /
indriyāṇām manaś c'āsmi bhūtānām asmi cetanā //22//

Vedānām : Of the Vedas *sāmavedaḥ* : the Sama Veda *asmi* : I am, *devānām* : of the Devas *vāsavaḥ* : *Indra asmi* : I am, *indriyāṇām* : among *Indriyas* *manaḥ* : mind *ca* : and *asmi* : I am, *bhūtānām* : in beings *cetanā* : intelligence *asmi* : I am.

22. Of the Vedas, I am the *Sāma Veda*; among the Devas, I am *Indra*; of the senses, I am the mind; and of living beings, I am intelligence.

रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।

वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥ 23 ॥

Rudrāṇām Śaṅkaraś c'āsmi vitt'eśo yakṣa-rakṣasām /
Vasūnām pāvakaś c'āsmi Meruḥ śikhariṇām aham //23//

Rudrāṇām : Of the Rudras *Śaṅkaraḥ* : *Śaṅkara ca* : and *asmi* : I am, *yakṣarakṣasām* : among *Yakṣās* and *Rākṣasas* (Demigods and Titans), *Vitteśaḥ* : I am the Lord of wealth (*Kubera*), *Vasūnām pāvakaḥ* : of the Vasus I am *Agni ca* : and *asmi* : I am, *śikhariṇām* : of mountains *Meruḥ* : Mount Meru *aham* : I am.

23. Of the eleven Rudras, I am *Śaṅkara*; among the Demigods and Titans, I am *Kubera*; of the eight Vasus, I am *Agni*; among mountains, I am the Meru.

पुरोवसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम् ।
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामसि सागरः ॥ 24 ॥

Purodhasām ca mukhyam mām viddhi Pārtha Bṛhaspatim |
senānīnām aham skandah sarasām asmi sāgarah ||24||

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *Mām* : Me *Purodhasām* : among priests
mukhyam : the chief *Bṛhaspatim* : Bṛhaspati, the priest of the
Devas *viddhi* : know, *senānīnām* : among war-lords *skandah* :
Skanda or Subrahmaṇya *aham* : I am, *sarasām* : of lakes *sāgarah* :
ocean *asmi* : I am.

24. Among the priests, know me to be the chief of them—
Bṛhaspati, the priest of the Devas, O Arjuna. Among the
war-lords I am Skanda; among the water reservoirs, I am the
ocean.

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्येकमक्षरम् ।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽसि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥ 25 ॥

Maharṣīṇām Bhṛgur aham girām asmy ekam akṣaram |
yajñānām japa-yajño'smi sthāvarāṇām Himālayah ||25||

Maharṣīṇām : Among the great sages *Bhṛguḥ* : the sage *Bhṛgu*
aham : I am, *girām* : among utterances *ekamakṣaram* : the mono-
syllable 'Om', *yajñānām* : among forms of worship *japayajñah* :
silent repetition of Divine names *asmi* : I am, *sthāvarāṇām* : among
immovable objects *Himālayah* : I am Mount Himālaya.

25. Among the great sages, I am Bhṛgu; among utterances
I am the mono-syllabled 'Om'; among holy offerings, I am the
offering of Japa (silent repetition of Divine names); among
immovable objects, I am the mount Himālaya ,

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वीणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥ 26 ॥

Aśvatthaḥ sarva-vṛkṣāṇām devarṣīṇām ca Nāradaḥ |
gandharvāṇām Citrarathaḥ siddhānām Kapilo munih ||26||

Sarvaṃśāṇām : Among all trees *aśvatthaḥ* : I am the holy fig tree, *devaśṣṇām* : among the divine sages *Nāradaḥ* : I am Nārada, *ca* : and *gandharvāṇām* : among the celestial artistes *Citrarathaḥ* : I am Citraratha, *siddhānām* : among perfected ones *Kapilaḥ muniḥ* : I am Kapila the sage.

26. Among all trees, I am the holy fig-tree; among the divine sages, I am Nārada; among celestial artistes, I am Citraratha; among perfected souls, I am Kapila the sage.

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।

पेरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥ 27 ॥

Uccaiṣṛvasam aśvānām viddhi mām amṛtodbhavam /
Airāvataṃ gaj'endrāṇām narāṇām ca nar'ādhīpam //27//

Aśvānām : Among horses *amṛtodbhavam* : emerged at the time of the churning of the milk-ocean for ambrosia *Uccaiśravasam* : the horse *Uccaiśravas*, *gajendrāṇām* : of lordly elephants *Airāvataṃ* : the white elephant *Airāvata*, *narāṇām* : among men *narādhīpam* : king (leader of men) *ca* : and *mām* : Me *viddhi* : know.

27. Among horses know Me to be the nectar-born *Uccaiśravas*, among the lordly elephants, the white celestial elephant *Airāvata*; and among men, persons endowed with leadership.

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामसि कामधुक् ।

प्रजनश्वासि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामसि वासुकिः ॥ 28 ॥

Āyudhānām ahaṃ vajraṃ dhenūnām asmi kāma-dhuk /
prajānaś c'āsmi Kandarpaḥ sarpāṇām asmi Vāsukiḥ //28//

Āyudhānām : Among weapons *vajram* : thunderbolt *ahaṃ* : I am, *dhenūnam* : among cows *Kāmadhuk* : Kamadhenu *asmi* : I am, *prajānaḥ* : of progenitors *Kandarpaḥ* : god of love *asmi* : I am, *sarpāṇām* : among serpents *Vāsukiḥ* : Vāsuki *asmi* : I am *ca* : and.

28. Among weapons I am the thunderbolt; among cows, *Kāmadhenu* the celestial cow of plenty; among progeni-

tors, Kāma the god of love; and among serpents, Vāsuki.

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।

पितृणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥ 29 ॥

Anantaś c'āsmi nāgānām Varuṇo yādasām aham /
pitṛṇām Aryamā c'āsmi Yamaḥ saṁyamatām aham //29//

Nāgānām : Among Nāgas *Anantaḥ* : Ananta *ca* : and *asmi* : I am, *yādasām* : among water-dwellers *varuṇaḥ* : Varuṇa *aham* : I am, *pitṛṇām* : among the Pitṛs (manes) *Aryamā* : their leader *Aryamā ca* : and *asmi* : I am, *saṁyamatām* : among the enforcers of law *Yamaḥ* : Yama *aham* : I am.

29. Among serpents I am Ananta; among water dwellers I am Varuṇa; among the manes I am Aryamā; and among the enforcers of law I am Yama.

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।

मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥ 30 ॥

Prahlādaś c'āsmi daityānām kālaḥ kalayatām aham /
mṛgāṇām ca mṛg'endro'ham Vainateyaś ca pakṣiṇām //30//

Daityānām : Among Daityas *Prahlādaḥ* : Prahlāda *ca* : and *asmi* : I am, *kalayatām* : among measurers *kālaḥ* : Time *aham* : I am, *mṛgāṇām* : among animals *mṛgendraḥ* : the lion *ca* : and, *pakṣiṇām* : among birds *vainateyaḥ* : Garuḍa *ca* : and *aham* : I am.

30. Among Daityas I am Prahlāda; among calculators I am time; among animals I am the lion; and among birds I am Garuḍa.

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।

झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥ 31 ॥

Pavanaḥ pavatām asmi Rāmaḥ saśtra-bhṛtām aham /
jhaṣāṇām makaraś c'āsmi srotasām asmi Jāhnavī //31//

Pavatām : Among purifying agents *pavanaḥ* : wind *asmi* : I am, *sastrabhytām* : among warriors *rāmaḥ* : Rāma *aham* : I am, *jhaṣṭhām* : among the fish *makaraḥ* : the shark *asmi* : I am, *srotasām* : among rivers *jāhnavī* : the Ganga *asmi* : I am.

31. Among purifying agents I am the wind; among warriors I am Rāma; among the fish I am the shark; and among rivers I am the Ganga.

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।

अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥ 32 ॥

Sargāṇām ādir antaś ca madhyam c'aiv āham Arjuna /
adhyātma-vidyā vidyānām vādaḥ pravadatām aham //32//

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *sargāṇām* : of the created objects *ādīḥ* : beginning *madhyam* : middle *ca* : and *antaḥ* : end *ca* : and *aham* : I am, *vidyānām* : of sciences *adhyātmavidyā* : I am the science of the spirit, *pravadatām* : among the debators *vādaḥ* : I am the correct reasoning power.

32. O Arjuna! Of the created objects I am the beginning, middle and end; among the sciences, I am the science of the spirit; and of debators I am the power of correct reasoning.

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।

अहमेवाक्षयः कालो घाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥ 33 ॥

Akṣarāṇām akāro'smi dvandvaḥ sāmāsikasya ca /
aham ev'ākṣayaḥ kālo dhātā'ham viśvato-mukhaḥ //33//

Akṣarāṇām : Among letters *akāraḥ* : letter A *asmi* : I am, *sāmāsikasya* : of compound word formations *dvandvaḥ* : I am the Dvandva compound (the copulative), *aham* : I am *ākṣayaḥ* : the never ending *kālaḥ* : time *ca* : and, *viśvatomukhaḥ* : with face on all sides, all-seeing *dhātā* : Brahmā the dispenser of Karma *aham* : I am.

33. Among letters I am the letter 'A', among compound word formations I am the copulative (*dvandva*). I am also the never-ending Time and the all-seeing Brahmā (the dispenser of the Karmas of all beings).

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।

कीर्तिः श्रीर्वक्त्रि नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ 34 ॥

Mrtyuḥ sarva-haraś c'āham udbhavaś ca bhaviṣyatām /
kīrtiḥ śrīr vāk ca nārīṇāṃ smṛtir medhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā ||34||

Sarvaharaḥ : All-destroying *mrtyuḥ* : Death *ca* : and, *bhaviṣyatām* : of things yet to come *udbhavaḥ* : origin *ca* : and, *nārīṇām* : of powers considered female *kīrtiḥ* : fame *śrīḥ* : fortune *vāk* : speech *smṛtiḥ* : memory *medhā* : intelligence *dhṛtiḥ* : constancy *kṣamā* : patience *aham* : I am.

34. I am the all-destroying Death, and I am the origin of all that are to come too. Among virtues considered as female I am fame, fortune, speech, memory, intelligence, constancy and patience.

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।

मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥ 35 ॥

Bṛhat-sāma tathā sāmṇām gāyatrī chandasām aham /
māsānām mārgaśīrṣo'ham ṛtūnām kusumākaraḥ ||35||

Sāmṇām : Among *Sāma* hymns *bṛhatsāmā* : I am the *Bṛhatsāman* (the Great Chant), *tathā* : so also *chandasām* : among the Vedic metres *gāyatrī* : I am *Gāyatrī*, *māsānām* : among months *mārgaśīrṣaḥ* : the month *Mārgaśīrṣa* (Nov-Dec), *ṛtūnām* : of seasons *kusumākaraḥ* : I am the flower-bearing spring.

35. Among the *Sāma* hymns I am the *Bṛhatsāman* (the Great Chant); among the Vedic metres, I am the *Gāyatrī*; among months, I am *Mārgaśīrṣa* (Nov-Dec.); and among seasons, I am the flower-bearing spring.

द्युतं चलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।

जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥ 36 ॥

Dyūtaṃ chalayatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham /
jayo'smi vyavasāyo'smi sattvaṃ sattvavatām aham ||36||

Chalayātām : Of the deceitful *dyūtaḥ* : dicing *asmi* : I am, *tejasvinām* : of the powerful *tejaḥ* : power *aham* : I am, *jayaḥ* : victory *aham asmi* : I am, *vyavasāyaḥ* : determination *asmi* : I am, *sattvavatām* : of the good *sattvam* : goodness *aham* : I am.

36. I am the dicing of the deceitful, the power of the powerful and the goodness of the good. I am victory, determination and constancy too.⁴

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽसि पाण्डवानां धनंजयः ।

मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥ 37 ॥

Vṛṣṇinām Vāsudevōsmi Pāṇḍavānām Dhanamjayaḥ /
muninam apy aham Vyāsah kavīnām Uśanā kavīḥ //37//

Vṛṣṇinām : Among the *Vṛṣṇis Vāsudevaḥ*; *Vāsudeva*, *pāṇḍavānām* : among *Pāṇḍavas Dhanamjayaḥ* : Arjuna *asmi* : I am, *api* : also *muninām* : among sages *Vyāsah* : *Vyāsa*, *kavīnām* : among poets *Uśanā* : *Uśanas kavīḥ* : the poet *asi* : I am.

37. I am *Vāsudeva* among the *Vṛṣṇis* and Arjuna among the *Pāṇḍavas*. I am *Vyāsa* among sages, and *Uśanas* (*Ācārya Sukra*) among the far-sighted.

दण्डो दमयतामसि नीतिरसि जिगीषताम् ।

मौनं चैवासि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥ 38 ॥

Daṇḍo damayatām asmi nītirasmi jigīṣatām /
maunam c' aiv'āsmi guhyānām jñānam jñānavatām aham //38//

Damayātām : Of the disciplinarians *daṇḍaḥ* : rod of chastisement *asmi* : I am, *jigīṣatām* : of those who seek success *nītiḥ* : wise policy *asmi* : I am, *guhyānām* : in the art of secrecy *maunam* : silence *asmi* : I am, *jñānavatām* : of the wise *jñānam* : wisdom *aham* : I am.

38. I am the rod of chastisement in the disciplinarians; I am the wise policy in those seeking success; I am silence in the art of secrecy; and I am wisdom in the wise.

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।

न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ 39 ॥

*Yac c'āpi sarva-bhūtānām bījam tad aham Arjuna /
na tad asti vinā yat syān mayā bhūtam car'ācaram* //39//

*Arjuna : O Arjuna sarvabhūtānām : of all beings bījam : seed
yat : what ca : and tat : that aham : I am, carācaram : fleeting
and lasting (living and non-living) yat : what bhūtam : entities
asti : exist tat : that āpi : also, mayā vinā : without Me, na syāt :
cannot exist.*

39. Of all beings I am the seed, O Arjuna. Whatever exists in this world, living or non-living, none of them can be, if I were not.

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।

एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥ 40 ॥

*Nā'nto'sti mama divyānām vibhūtīnām paramtapa /
eṣa tū'ddeśataḥ prokto vibhūter vistaro mayā* //40//

*Paramtapa : O scorcher of enemies, mama : My divyānām :
divine vibhūtīnām : manifestations antaḥ : end na asti : there is
not. Vibhūteh : Of the manifestations eṣaḥ : this vistaraḥ : descrip-
tion tu : only uddeśataḥ : by way of examples mayā : by Me,
proktaḥ : expounded.*

40. O great warrior! There is no end to my divine manifestations. What I have expounded forms only a few of them by way of examples.

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशंसंभवम् ॥ 41 ॥

*Yad-yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā /
tat-tad evā'vagaccha tvaṁ mama tejo'mśa-sambhavam* //41//

Vibūtimat : Endowed with glory *śrīmat* : with attractiveness *ūrjitam* : with vigour *eva vā* : also *yat yat* : whatever *sattvam* : entities (exist) *tat tat* : all that *mama* : My *tejomśasambhavam* : born of a fragment of my splendour *avagaecha* : understand.

41. Whatever there is endowed with extraordinary glory, attractiveness and vigour, know all that to be born of a fragment of my power.

अथवा बहूनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।
विष्टभ्याहमिवं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ 42 ॥

Athavā bahun'aitena kiṁ jñātena tava'rjuna /
viṣṭabhy'āham idam kṛtsnam ek'āṁśena sthito jagat //42//

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *athavā* : but then *bahunā* : by detailed *jñānena* : knowledge *etena* : by this *tava* : to you *kim* : what avails? *Kṛtsnam* : whole *idam* : this *jagat* : world *ekāṁśena* : by one single fragment *viṣṭabhya* : supporting *aham sthitaḥ* : I remain.

42. But then, of what avail is this detailed understanding of my manifestations to you, O Arjuna! Supporting this mighty universe with but one single fragment of My self, I remain unchanged and transcendent.

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विभूति
योगो नाम दशमोऽध्यायः ॥ 10 ॥

NOTES

1. Vr.10: The exact meaning of *Buddhi Yoga* is difficult to arrive at. It must mean the rousing of a new power of understanding, which may be described as intuitive power. The word 'intuition' is a very treacherous and deceptive word. Many people

use it for irrational and arbitrary conclusions of theirs, which are the mere projections of their desire-nature. A true intuition can come only in the mind of one who is pure and free from desires and passions. He must be a *śānta yuktah*, one whose inner life is fully integrated by the practice of self-control and mental discipline. The so-called intuitions of others are only projections of their desires by way of wish-fulfilment. The mind must be free from all desires born of sensate life. The mind should become free from modes based on such desires. It must become moulded into a single mode of aspiration for Truth—*bhajatām prītipūrvakam* or yearning for Him with whole-hearted love. To such persons the Lord gives *Buddhi-yoga* or intuitive power. It is a new capacity of understanding. Just as sense powers and rationality give us capacity to know certain vistas of Reality, intuition gives a new view of things dominated by the Divine Presence. It is entirely different from the so-called intuitions of desire-bound people.

2. *Vr.11*: It is stated here that the enlightenment thus given is a gift of God out of His grace—*anukampārtham*. It is a purely Bhakti idea, and will suit only a Bhedābheda metaphysics or identity in difference, in which God, though not different, is distinct from the Jīva in ignorance. But He is not something extraneous to the Jīva. This is shown by the expression *ātmabhāvasthah*—by revealing His presence in the innermost core of the Jīva. That this intuition is not any kind of wish-fulfilment, but a revelation of the nature of things is shown by its comparison to what happens when a light is introduced where darkness was reigning. A new vista opens itself to the spirit so illumined. Thus the Gītā clearly accepts the doctrines of Divine grace and the self-sufficiency of Bhakti to give enlightenment through the bestowal of Divine grace. The place of self-effort is to aspire for Him with all one's heart and soul, but its fulfilment in spiritual realization depends entirely on His grace..

3. *Vr.19*: *Vibhūti* means special manifestations of Divine majesty, power and glory. The word arises from *Vi + bha*, meaning 'arise, expand, appear'. The whole of Nature, including the mighty universe and what is experienced in it, is a declaration of the power and majesty of the Creator. Three attitudes are possible in regard to things experienced in Nature. Sri Ramakrishna expounds these attitudes in a simple analogy of a well-designed

garden. A common sight-seer goes there and sees the fine flowers. His interest is only to pluck some flowers for his buttonholes and to carry home a handful of them. A botanist goes there. He is interested in the scientific side of it, and studies the plants and their flowers from that point of view. A man of a devotional and philosophic mind goes there. The design of the whole garden and the beauty of flowers charm him, but in place of being merely taken up with them, he looks for the designer of the garden whose wisdom is reflected in it. These three approaches are possible towards Nature as a whole. For the practical man it is only some thing to be exploited for his enjoyment. For a scientist, who is actuated by curiosity to know, it is something to be investigated and studied for the sake of understanding it. For a spiritual man, the wisdom and power revealed in Nature is a pointer to Nature's God—to Him whose mere shadow Nature is. This last is the view that the Hindu scriptures take. Creation, sustentation and dissolution form an overflow of Divine Bliss. These are no doubt an expression, but only an infinitely small expression, of His majesty and power. So the Gītā, in concluding the section on Vibhūti, gives out as the Bhagavān's declaration, "Supporting this whole universe with a fragment of My self, I remain unchanging and transcendent."

Man's mind is generally outward-going. So if he is educated into the faith that all that he sees outside is an expression of His glory, that will be a way to teach him remembrance of God through all perceptions, and thus it will add to the width and depth of his devotion. So it is in order to help man with a means for generating and strengthening devotion to God, that the Vibhūti are enumerated. In this enumeration only some very striking items are mentioned. It must be taken as covering all other aspects also.

It is perhaps to convey this very idea of Nature as a pointer to the Divine that the *Īśopaniṣad* declares: "All this is fit to be covered with the Lord—all these that are moving in this moving world."

4. *Vr.36*: It is rather puzzling to note that dicing, which is a form of gambling, and which is recognised here itself as a field for the deceitful, is called a Vibhūti of the Lord. It is definitely a disvalue and a source of evil. All the other manifestations

mentioned here are values noble and desirable. Can it be that dicing is introduced here in a symbolic way, to indicate that even what man considers the opposite of virtue, has also got its ultimate source in Him? Both Vidya and Avidya are aspects of His Māya, and must be considered as having their support in Him. Otherwise we shall have to posit a Devil, an anti-God, as some other religions do, for explaining evil. If we accept that, this anti-God or Devil also comes within the will of God; then it ceases to be different from the Avidya theory. The other alternative of accepting the Devil as outside God's will, is to accept another existence and power equal to God Himself. This is repugnant to the teachings of Hindu scriptures.

The mention of dicing in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which is a part of *Mahābhārata*, seems to be meaningful in another way. It is a deceitful game of dice, by which the Pāṇḍava brothers are deprived of their kingdom, leading to the great Mahābhārata war fought for the recovery of the lost kingdom. It is through this war that Kṛṣṇa fulfils the purpose of his Incarnation in two ways — one, by effecting the destruction of all the evil and oppressive rulers, and two, by using the occasion for delivering His great message to mankind through the Gītā, with Arjuna as the medium for it. Can it therefore be a suggestion that what is considered evil also will appear meaningful, when the full perspective of the Divine plan is gained in the long run!

5. Vr.42: This verse gives the general purpose of the enumeration of Divine manifestations given above. They are just to draw man's attention to a few of the very striking manifestations of divine power, glory and wisdom. Through them it is taught that the whole of the manifested universe, which is so vast that human thought can contemplate it only very partially, is but a faint reflection of the Divine. In this way the outward-going mind is trained to contemplate the Divine. Through this, devotion to Him is generated, and augmented in those who have already the germs of it in them.

Chapter XI

विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगः

THE VISION OF THE COSMIC FORM

SUMMARY

The Vision Described: (1-55) Arjuna now wants to have a direct experience of the Divine majesty, the source and support of all that exists. The Lord gives him a new power of insight with which Arjuna becomes capable of having a direct experience of the Divine. The Lord reveals to him His cosmic form in which he finds in an instant all that exists, past, present and future, spread out as it were as part and parcel of an all-comprehending Whole, a Divine Person, whose awful majesty and stupefying splendour are too much for him to bear. He finds that all beings are helplessly drawn and absorbed into His being—by inexorable Time, with which He declares His identity. Arjuna experiences that there is only one Will, namely the Divine will, and that the will of all the centres of consciousness included in His being are but instruments for serving Him and accomplishing His purposes. He finds that all the armies mobilised and arrayed for battle have already been destroyed by the Lord's will, and that he himself is just an occasion for this.

Transformation of Arjuna: The experience shakes Arjuna to the very core of his being and he loses himself in utter self-abnegation and devotional absorption. At the end of it, Arjuna is informed by the Lord that such an experience as he has had is very rare, and only through unswerving devotion can man achieve this. So he is exhorted to be a devotee of the Lord, carrying out His

will, looking upon Him as the highest, and having attachment for nothing but the Lord.

अर्जुन उवाच

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।

यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Madanugrahāya paramam guhyam adhyātma samjñitam /
yat tvay'oktam vacas tena moho'yaṁ vigato mama //1//

Madanugrahāya: For blessing me *paramam* : the highest *guhyam* : known only in select circles *adhyātmāsamjñitam* : what concerns the spirit *yat* : what *vacas* : instruction *tvayā* : by Thee *uktam* : spoken, *tena* : by that *mama* : my *ayam* : this *mohaḥ* : delusion *vigataḥ* : is gone.

Arjuna said:

1. Thy instructions on the grand Mystery, the highest spiritual Truth, imparted to me out of Thy abounding grace, have dispelled my delusion.

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां भूतौ विस्तरशो मया ।

त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

Bhav'āpyayau hi bhūtānām śrutau vistaraśo mayā
tvattaḥ kamala-patr'ākṣa mātmyam api c'avyayam //2//

Kamalapatrākṣa : O lotus eyed one! *tvattaḥ* : from Thee *bhūtānām* : of creatures *bhavāpyayau* : origin and dissolution *mayā* : by me *vistaraśaḥ* : at length *śrutau* : have been heard *hi* : indeed; *avyayam* : undecaying *mātmyam* : greatness *api ca* : also.

2. O lotus-eyed One! From Thee I have heard at length about the origin and dissolution of creatures as also about Thy greatness that knows no decay.¹

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।

द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥ 3 ॥

*Evam etad yath'āttha tvam ātmānam param'eśvara /
draṣṭum icchāmi te rūpam aiśvaram puruṣ'ottama* //3//

Parameśvara : O Supreme Being! *tvam* : Thou *ātmānam* : Thyself *yathā* : in what way *āttha* : describe *evam* : in that way *etat* : it is *Puruṣottama* : O greatest among men! *te* : Thy *aiśvaram* : as the God of all *rūpam* : form *draṣṭum* : to see *icchāmi* : I desire.

3. Thou art, O Lord Supreme, even as what Thou hast declared Thyself to be. (I understand and accept it.) Yet I now desire to see that form of Thine as the Lord of all.

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।

योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ 4 ॥

*Manyase yadi tac chakyaṁ mayā draṣṭum iti prabho /
yog'eśvara tato me tvam darśay'ātmānam avyayam* //4//

Prabho : O Lord *tat* : that *draṣṭum* : to experience *mayā* : by me *śakyaṁ* : possible *iti* : thus *yadi* : if *manyase* : Thou thinkest, *tataḥ* : then *yogeshvara* : O Lord of Yoga! *tvam* : Thou *avyayam* : immutable *ātmānam* : form *me* : to me *darśaya* : reveal.

4. If, O Lord, Thou thinkest me worthy of experiencing that immutable form of Thine, then deign to reveal the same to me, O Thou Master of all Yoga!

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।

नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ 5 ॥

Srī bhagavān uvāca :

*Paśya me Pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo'tha sahasraśaḥ /
nānā-vidhāni divyāni nānā-varṇākṛtīni ca* //5//

Pārtha : O son of *Pṛthā*! *nānāvidhāni* : manifold *nānāvarṇākṛtīni* : of varied hues and shapes *ca* : and *me* : My *śataśaḥ* : in hundreds *atha* : and *sahasraśaḥ* : in thousands *divyāni* : divine *rūpāni* : forms *paśya* : see.

The Blessed Lord said:

5. Behold, O *Pārtha*, My manifold forms in their hundreds and thousands—all divine and all of varied hues and shapes.

पश्यादित्यान्वसून् रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा ।

बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ॥ 6 ॥

Paśy'ādityān Vasūn Rudrān Aśvinau Marutas tathā /
bahūny adṛṣṭa-pūrvāṇi paśy'āścaryāṇi Bhārata //6//

Bhārata : O scion of Bharata's clan! *ādityān* : suns *vasūn* : Vasus *rudrān* : Rudras *aśvinau* : the pair of Aśvins *marutaḥ* : winds *atha* : likewise *paśya* : behold; *tathā* : in the same way *adṛṣṭapūrvāṇi* : of forms unseen before *bahūni* : many *āścaryāṇi* : marvels *paśya* : behold.

6. Behold the Adityas and the Vasus, the Rudras and the Aśvins, and the Maruts likewise — behold these marvels unseen by any before, O scion of Bharata's clan!

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।

मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चाप्यदृष्टमिच्छसि ॥ 7 ॥

Ih'aika-siham jagat kṛtsnam paśy'ādya sacar'ācaram /
mama dehe Guḍākeśa yac c'ānyad draṣṭum icchasi //7//

Guḍākeśa : O conqueror of sleep! *sacarācaram* : with objects moving and not moving *kṛtsnam* : entire *jagat* : world *anyat yat* : whatever else *ca* : and *draṣṭum* : to see *icchasi* : desire, *ta* : that *mama* : My *dehe* : in body *iha* : here *ekastham* : abiding as a unity *adya* : now *paśya* : see.

7. O conqueror of sleep! Behold here and now the whole of this universe of conscious and unconscious entities as also

anything else you desire to experience—all abiding as a unity in My body.

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ 8 ॥

*Na tu mām śakyase draṣṭum anen'aiva sva-cakṣuṣā /
divyaṁ dadāmi te cakṣuḥ paśya me yogam aiśvaram* //8//

Anena : By this *svacakṣuṣā eva* : merely with your physical eye
mām : Me *draṣṭum* : to see *na śakyase* : is not possible; *tu* : at all
divyam : divine *cakṣuḥ* : eyes *te* : to you *dadāmi* : I give; *me* : My
aiśvaram *yogam* : power as the Lord of all might *paśya* : behold.

8. You cannot have an experience of Me merely with your physical eye. I therefore give you the power of divine vision. Behold with that My power as the Lord of all.

संजय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।

दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥ 9 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca

*Evam uktvā tato rājan mahā-yog'eśvaro hariḥ /
darśayāmāsa Pārthāya paramam rūpam aiśvaram* //9//

Rājan : O King! *mahāyogeshvaraḥ* : master of spiritual powers
Hariḥ : Hari *evam* : in this way *uktvā* : saying *tataḥ* : afterwards
paramam : transcendent *aiśvaram* : Divine *rūpam* : form *pārthāya* :
to Arjuna *darśayāmāsa* : revealed.

Sanjaya said:

9. So saying, Hari, the Master of all spiritual powers, now revealed to Arjuna His transcendent form as the Lord of the universe.

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् ।

अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥ 10 ॥

Aneka-vaktra-nayanam anek'ādbhuta-darśanam /

aneka-divy'ābharaṇam divy'ānek'odyat'āyudham //10//

Anekavaktranayanam : Having countless faces and eyes *anekādbhuta darśanam* : exhibiting countless features provoking wonder
anekadivyābharaṇam : bedecked with countless celestial ornaments
divyānekodyatāyudham : equipped with countless divine weapons held aloft.

10. Having countless faces and eyes; exhibiting countless features; provoking wonder; bedecked with countless celestial ornaments; equipped with countless divine weapons held aloft;

दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।

सर्वश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ 11 ॥

Divya-maly'āmbara-dharam divya-gandh'ānulepanam /

sarv'āścaryamayam devam anantam viśvato-mukham //11//

Divyamālyāambaradharam : Wearing celestial garlands and vestments *divyagandhānulepanam* : anointed with celestial unguents and perfumes *sarvāścaryamayam* : replete with expressions of most surprising marvel *devam* : the divinity *anantam* : boundless *viśvatomukham* : with face everywhere.

11. Wearing heavenly garlands and vestments; anointed with celestial unguents and perfumes; replete with incredible, marvellous features—a divinity boundless and all-seeing.

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।

यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ 12 ॥

Divi sūrya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā /

yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsas tasya mah'ātmanah //12//

Divi : In the sky *sūryasahasrasya* : of innumerable suns *bhāḥ* : brilliance *yugapat* : all at once *utthitā bhavet* : were to blaze forth *yadi* : if, *sā* : that *tasya* : of that *mahātmanah* : of the great Being *bhāsaḥ* : splendour *saḍṛṣī syāt* : would be like.

12. What brilliance there would have been if a thousand suns were to blaze forth all of a sudden in the sky—to that was comparable the splendour of that great Being.

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।

अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ 13 ॥

Tatr'aika-sthaṁ jagat kṛtsnam pravibhaktam anekadhā /
apaśyad deva-devasya śarīre Pāṇḍavas tadā //13//

Anekadhā pravibhaktam : Divided into the manifold *kṛtsnam* : the entire *jagat* : the world *devadevasya* : of the God of all divinities *tatra* : there *śarīre* : in the body *ekastham* : as abiding in the unity of His being *tadā* : then *Pāṇḍavaḥ* : the son of *Pāṇḍu* *apaśyat* : saw.

13. There in the body of that God of all divinities, the son of Pāṇḍu then saw the whole universe — a multiplicity abiding unified in His being.²

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा घनंजयः ।

प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृतान्जलिरभाषत ॥ 14 ॥

Tataḥ sa vismay'aviṣṭo hr̥ṣṭa-romā dhanamjayah /
praṇamya śirasā devam kṛt'āñjalir abhāṣata //14//

Tataḥ : Thereupon *vismayāviṣṭaḥ* : overwhelmed with amazement *hr̥ṣṭaromāḥ* : with hair standing on end *saḥ* : that *dhanamjayah* : Arjuna *devam* : to the Lord *śirasā praṇamya* : bowing with his head *kṛtāñjaliḥ* : with hands folded in salutation *abhāṣata* : said.

14. Thereupon Arjuna, struck with amazement and his hairs standing on end, bowed down before the Lord and said with hands folded in salutation.

अर्जुन उवाच

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे सर्वास्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान् ।
ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थमृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ 15 ॥

Arjuna uvāca

*Paśyāmi devāṁs tava deva dehe, sarvāṁs tathā
bhūta-viśeṣa-saṁghān |*

*brahmāṇam īśaṁ kamal'āsana-sthaṁ, ṛṣīṁś ca
sarvān uragāṁś ca divyān*

//15//

Deva : O Lord *tava* : Thy *dehe* : in the body *devān* : Devas *tathā* : likewise *sarvān* : all *bhūtaviśeṣasaṁghān* : varied hosts of beings *divyān* : divine *sarvān* : all *ṛṣīn* : Rṣhis *uragān* : serpents *ca* : and *tathā* : likewise *kamalāsana-sthaṁ* : seated on a lotus *īśaṁ* : Lord *brahmāṇam* : Brahmā *ca* : and *paśyāmi* : I see.

Arjuna said:

15. In Thy form I see, O Lord, all the Devas and all the varied hosts of other beings—the divine Rṣis, the celestial serpents and likewise Brahmā the Lord of creation, seated on his lotus throne.

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥ 16 ॥

*Aneka-bāhū'dara-vaktra-netraṁ, paśyāmi tvāṁ
sarvato'nantarūpam |*

*n'āntaṁ na madhyaṁ na punas tav'ādiṁ, paśyāmi
viśveśvara viśva-rūpa*

//16//

Anekabahūdaravaktranetram : With a myriad arms, trunks, faces, eyes, *anantarūpam* : with all-encompassing form *tvāṁ* : Thee *sarvataḥ* : everywhere *paśyāmi* : I see *Viśveśvara* : O Lord of all! *viśvarūpa* : O All-formed Being! *Tava* : Thy *antaṁ* : end *na* : not, *madhyaṁ* : middle *na* : not, *punaḥ* : again *ādiṁ* : beginning *na* : not *paśyāmi* : see.

16. I see Thee in Thy all-encompassing form everywhere—with myriad arms, myriad trunks, myriad mouths, myriad eyes. O Lord of all! O the All-formed! I see not Thy beginning, Thy middle, or Thy end.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ताद्दीप्तानलाकंध्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥ 17 ॥

*Kiriṭinaṁ gadinam cakriṇam ca, tejo-rāśiṁ sarvato dīptimantam |
paśyāmi tvāṁ durnirīkṣyam samantād, dīpt'ānalārka-dyutim
aprameyam* //17//

Kiriṭinaṁ : With diadem *gadinam* : with mace *cakriṇam* : with discus *ca* : and *tejo-rāśiṁ* : mass of brilliance *sarvataḥ* : on all sides *dīptimantam* : shining *durnirīkṣyam* : hard to look at *dīptānal-ārka-dyutim* : having the brilliance of burning fire or the blazing sun *aprameyam* : passing all bounds *tvāṁ* : Thee *samantāt* : everywhere *paśyāmi* : I see.

17. Diademed and armed with mace and discus, I see Thee, boundless Being, shining everywhere as a mass of light difficult to look at, like the blazing fire or the incandescent sun.

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥ 18 ॥

*Tvam akṣaram paramaṁ veditavyam, tvam asya
viśvasya param nidhānam |
tvam avyayaḥ śāśvata-dharma-goptā, sanātanas
tvam puruṣo mato me* //18//

Tvam : Thou *veditavyam* : to be realised *paramam* : the supreme *akṣaram* : the Imperishable; *tvam* : Thou *asya* : of this *viśvasya* : world *param* : ultimate *nidhānam* : abode; *tvam* : Thou *avyayaḥ* : perennial *śāśvata dharmā goptā* : Guardian of the eternal law; *tvam* : Thou *sanātanaḥ puruṣaḥ* : ancient being *me* : my *mataḥ* : view.

18. In my view Thou art the Supreme, Imperishable Being to be realised—the world's ultimate refuge and the guardian of eternal law, most ancient and perennial.

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्यमनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।

पश्यामि त्वां दीप्ताहुताशक्त्रं स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥19॥

Anādi-madhy'āntam ananta-vīryam, ananta-bāhum

śaśi-sūrya-netram |

paśyāmi tvāṁ dīpta-hutāśa-vaktram, sva-tejasā

viśvam idam tapantam

||19||

Anādimadhyāntam : Without beginning, middle and end *ananta-vīryam* : infinite in puissance *ananta bāhum* : with countless arms i.e., boundless energy functioning everywhere *śaśisūryanetram* : with the sun and moon as eyes *dīptahutāśavaktram* : with a face which shines like flaming fire *svatejasā* : with one's own spiritual radiance *idam viśvam* : this universe *tapantam* : heating, energising *tvām* : Thee *paśyāmi* : I see.

19. I see Thee—beginningless, middleless and endless; infinite in puissance; of boundless energy active everywhere; having the sun and the moon for eyes; with a face luminous like a flaming fire; and with spiritual radiance energising everything.

द्यावापृथिव्योर्दिमन्तरं हि व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।

दृष्ट्वाऽद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥20॥

Dyāvā-prthivyor idam antaram hi, vyāptam tvay'aikena

diśaś ca sarvāḥ |

dr̥ṣṭvā' dbhutam rūpam ugram tav'edaṁ loka-trayam

pravyathitam mah'ātman

||20||

Mahātman : O High-souled One! *dyāvāprthivyoḥ* : between heaven and earth *idam antaram* : this inter-space i.e., all space *tvayā ekena* : by Thee, the One existence *vyāptam* : permeated *hi* : indeed, *sarvāḥ* : all *diśaḥ* : quarters *ca* : and. *Adbhutam* : Wondrous *ugram* : awe-inspiring *tava* : Thy *idam* : this *rūpam* : form *dr̥ṣṭvā* : seeing *lokatra-*

yam : all the three worlds *pravyathitam* : are trembling with fear.

20. O High-souled One! All the three worlds tremble with fear at the sight of this wondrous, awe-inspiring form of Thine -- the one existence that fills all space betwixt heaven and earth and all the quarters as well.

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति ।
स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः
पुष्कलाभिः ॥ 21 ॥

*Amī hi tvām sura-saṅghā viśanti, kecid bhītāḥ
prāñjalayo gṛṇanti |*

*svasti'ty uktvā maharṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ stuvanti
tvām stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ*

//21/

Amī : These *surasaṅghāḥ* : the host of Devas *tvām* : Thee *viśanti* : enter *hi* : verily; *kecit* : some *bhītāḥ* : struck with fear *prāñjalayaḥ* : with hands joined in salutation *gṛṇanti* : praise; *svasti* : hail *iti* : thus *uktvā* : saying; *maharṣisiddhasaṅghāḥ* : bands of sages and celestial singers *puṣkalābhiḥ stutibhiḥ* : with hymns of abounding praise *tvām* : Thee *stuvanti* : extol.

21. Verily, these bands of Devas enter into Thee, while others, awe-struck, stand with hands joined in salutation. Hosts of sages and celestial singers cry 'Hail' unto Thee, and extol Thee with hymns of abounding praise.

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च ।
गन्धर्वयक्षसुरसिद्धसङ्घा वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥ 22 ॥

Rudrādityā Vasavo ye ca Sādhyā, Viśve'svinau

Marutaś c'oṣmapāś ca |

Gandharva-yakṣ'āsura-siddha-saṅghā, vīkṣante

tvām vismitāś c'aiva sarve

//22//

Rudrādityāḥ : Rudras and Ādityas *vasavaḥ* : Vasus *ye* : who *ca* : and *sādhyāḥ* : Sādhyas *viśve* : Viśve-devas *Aśvinau* : Aśvins

Marutaḥ : Maruts *ca* : and *uṣmapāḥ* : Manes *ca* : and *gandharva-yakṣāsurasiddhasaṅghāḥ* : the hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Siddhas *sarve eva* : all of them *ca* : and *vismitāḥ* : amazed *tvām* : Thee *vikṣante* : see.

22. And the Rudras, Ādityas, Vasus and Sādhya; Viśvas, Aśvins, Maruts and Manes; and the hosts of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras and Siddhas—all view Thee in utter amazement.

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं महाबाहो बहुबाहुरूपादम् ।

बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥ 23 ॥

Rūpaṁ mahat te bahu-vaktra-netraṁ, mahā-bāho
bahu-bāhūrupādam |

bahūdaram bahu-damṣṭrā-karālaṁ, dṛṣṭvā lokāḥ
pravyathitās tathā'ham ||23||

Mahābāho : O mighty one! *bahuvaktranetram* : having many faces and eyes *bahubāhūrupādam* : with many arms, thighs and legs *bahūdaram* : with many trunks *bahudamṣṭrākārālaṁ* : with many terrific fangs *te* : Thy *mahat* : stupendous *rūpaṁ* : form *dṛṣṭvā* : seeing, *lokāḥ* : the worlds *pravyathitāḥ* : immensely awestruck *aham* : I too *tathā* : am so.

23. At the sight of Thy stupendous form, with faces, eyes, arms, trunks, thighs and legs in myriads, and Thy numerous fangs of forbidding appearance—the whole world, O mighty one, is trembling in awe, even as I.

नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।

दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं
च विष्णो ॥ 24 ॥

Nabhaḥ-sprśaṁ diptam aneka-varṇaṁ, vyātt'ānanaṁ
dipta-viśāla-netram |

dṛṣṭvā hi tvāṁ pravyathit'āntarātmā dhṛtiṁ na
vindāmi śamaṁ ca Viṣṇo ||24||

Nabhaspr̥ṣam : Reaching to the skies *dīptam* : brilliant *anekavarṇam* : varied in colours *vyāttānanam* : with mouth wide open *dīptaviśāla-netram* : with large eyes glowing bright *tvām* : Thee *dr̥ṣtvā* : seeing *pravyathitāntarātmā* : one shaken with awe to the core of one's being *Viṣṇo* : O All pervading Being! *dhṛtim* : strength of mind *śamam* : mental equanimity *ca* : and *na vindāmi* : I do not find.

24. When I see Thy form reaching up to the skies and shining in varied hues, when I see Thy face with mouth wide open and eyes large and glowing bright, I feel shaken to the core of my being with awe. O All-pervading One! My strength is exhausted and my mind is without peace.

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि ।
दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ 25 ॥

Dam̐ṣṭrā-karālāni ca te mukhāni, dr̥ṣtv'aiva
kāl'ānala-sannibhāni |
diśo na jāne na labhe ca śarma, prasīda dev'eśa
jagan-nivāsa

||25||

Dam̐ṣṭrākarālāni : With fangs striking terror *ca* : and *kālānala-sannibhāni* : resembling the fire of cosmic destruction *te* : Thy *mukhāni* : faces *dr̥ṣtvā eva* : by seeing itself *diśaḥ* : quarters *na jāne* : do not know, *śarma* : peace *ca* : and *na labhe* : I do not find; *devēśa* : O Lord of Lords! *jagannivāsa* : O the home of the worlds! *prasīda* : be propitious.

25. Even by beholding Thy faces, resembling the fire of cosmic destruction and striking terror with the fangs, I lose all sense of direction as also my presence of mind. O Thou the Lord of all and the home of the worlds! be propitious unto me!

अमी च त्वां घृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः ।
भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ सहासदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥ 26 ॥

वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।
केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥ 27 ॥

Amī ca tvām Dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ
sarve sah'aiv'āvani-pālasaṅghaiḥ |
Bhīṣmo Droṇaḥ sūta-putras tathā'sau
sahā'smadīyair api yodha-mukhyaiḥ //26//

Vaktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viṣanti
daṁṣṭrā-karālāni bhay'ānakāni |
kecid vilagnā daśan'āntareṣu
saṁdrśyante cūrṇitair uttamāṅgaiḥ //27//

Avanipālasaṅghaiḥ saha eva : Along with the hosts of kings *amī* : these *Dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ* : the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra *Bhīṣmaḥ* : Bhīṣma *Droṇaḥ* : Droṇa *asau* : this *sūtaputraḥ* : Karṇa *ca* : and *tathā* : in the same way *asmadīyaiḥ* : with our *yodhamukhyaiḥ* : principal warriors *api* : also *saha* : with *sarve* : all *daṁṣṭrākārālāni* : with fangs striking terror *te* : Thy *vaktrāṇi* : mouths *tvaramāṇāḥ* : rushing *viṣanti* : enter; *kecid* : some *cūrṇitaiḥ* : crushed *uttamāṅgaiḥ* : with heads *daśanāntareṣu* : in the gaps between teeth *vilagnāḥ* : sticking *saṁdrśyante* : are seen.

26-27. All these hosts of kings, along with the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhīṣma, Droṇa and yonder Karṇa, as also the principal warriors on our side—all are rushing headlong into Thy fearful mouth set with terrible fangs. Some are seen with their heads crushed and caught in the gaps of Thy teeth.

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
 तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥28॥

Yathā nadīnām bahavo'mbu-vegāḥ
samudram ev'ābhimukhā dravanti |
tathā tav'āmī nara-loka-vīrā
viśanti vaktrāṇy abhivijvalanti //28//

Nadīnām : Of the rivers *bahavaḥ* : numerous *ambuvegāḥ* : swift-flowing waters *yathā* : as *samudram* : sea *eva* : verily *ābhiniukhāḥ* : towards *dravanti* : rush, *tathā* : in the same way *amī* : these *naralokavīrāḥ* : heroes among men *abhivijvalanti* : flaming *tava* : Thy *vaktrāṇi* : mouths *viṣanti* : enter.

28. As the swift-flowing waters of numerous rivers rush verily towards the sea, so these heroes among men are rushing into Thy flaming mouth.

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।

तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोकास्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥29॥

*Yathā pradīptam jvalanam pataṅgā
viśanti nāśāya samṛddhavegāḥ /
tath'aiva nāśāya viśanti lokāś
tav'āpi vaktrāṇi samṛddha-vegāḥ*

||29||

Pataṅgāḥ : Moths *nāśāya* : for their destruction *samṛddhavegāḥ* : swiftly *pradīptam* : blazing *jvalanam* : fire *yathā* : how *viśanti* : enter, *tathā eva* : in the same way *lokāḥ* : men *api* : also *nāśāya* : for their destruction *samṛddhavegāḥ* : with great speed *tava* : Thy *vaktrāṇi* : mouths *viśanti* : enter.

29. As moths swarm swiftly into a flaming fire and perish, so do these men rush headlong into Thy mouth to meet with sure destruction.

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ताल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः ।

तेजोभिरापूर्यं जगत्समग्रं भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥ 30 ॥

*Lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāt
lokān samagrān vadanair jvaladbhiḥ /
tejobhir āpūrya jagat samagram
bhāsas tav'ogrāḥ pratapanti Viṣṇo*

||30||

Jvaladbhiḥ : Flaming *adanaiḥ* : mouths *samantāt* : from all sides *samagrān lokān* : all the worlds *grasamānaḥ* : swallowing *lelihyase* : Thou lappest *Viṣṇo* : O all pervading Being! *Tava* : Thy *ugrāḥ* : awful *bhāsaḥ* : brilliance *samagram jagat* : the whole universe *tejobhiḥ* : with radiance *āpūrya* : filling *pratapanti* : scorches.

30. Thou lappest up all these worlds around, devouring them with Thy flaming mouth. Thy lustre, striking awe into the

minds of all, fills this entire universe with its radiance and scorches it, O Viṣṇu!

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥३१॥

*Ākhyāhi me ko bhavān ugra-rūpo
namo'stu te deva-vara prasīda /
vijñātum icchāmi bhavantam ādyam
na hi prajānāni tava pravṛttim* //31//

Ugrarūpaḥ : Of awe-inspiring form *bhavān* : Thou *kaḥ* : who art, *me* : to me *ākhyāhi* : tell. *Devavara* : O Supreme Lord! *te* : to Thee *namaḥ* : salutation *astu* : be; *prasīda* : be propitious. *Ādyam* : Primal Being *bhavantam* : Thee *vijñātum* : to know *icchāmi* : I desire; *tava* : Thy *pravṛttim* : working or purpose *na prajānāmi* : I do not understand *hi* : indeed.

31. Deign to tell me who Thou art with this awe-inspiring form. To Thee, O Supreme Lord, my salutation, and also my prayers for Thy grace. I wish to know more about Thee, the Primal Being, as also of Thy purpose here, of which I am in ignorance.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca :

*Kālo'smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho
lokān samāhartum iha pravṛttaḥ /
rte'pi tvām na bhaviṣyanti sarve
ye'vasthitāḥ pratyānīkeṣu yodhāḥ* //32//

Lokakṣayakṛt : World-consuming *pravṛddhaḥ* : vast, mighty *kālāḥ* : Time *asmi* : I am; *lokān* : all beings *samāhartum* : to annihilate *iha* : here *pravṛttaḥ* : engaged; *pratyānīkeṣu* : in rival armies *ye* :

whichever *yodhāḥ* : warriors *avasthitāḥ* : stand arrayed *te sarve* : all of them *tvām* : you *ṛte* : without *api* : even *na bhaviṣyanti* : shall not survive.

The Blessed Lord said:

32. I am the mighty world-destroying Time, engaged here in annihilating all beings. Even without you, not one of all the warriors arrayed in these rival armies shall survive.

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व जित्वा शत्रून् सुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ 33 ॥

Tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham /
may'aiv'aite nihatāḥ pūrvam eva
nimitta-mātram bhava savyasācin //33//

Tasmāt : Therefore *tvam* : you *uttiṣṭha* : arise, *yaśaḥ* : fame *labhasva* : win, *śatrūn* : enemies *jitvā* : subduing *saṁṛddham* : prosperous *rājyaṁ* : kingdom *bhuṅkṣva* : enjoy. *Mayā eva* : By myself *pūrvam eva* : even before *ete* : they *nihatāḥ* : slain. *Savyasācin* : O Master-bowman, Arjuna *nimittamātram* : an instrument alone *bhava* : be you.

33. Therefore arise! Win renown! And destroying your enemies, enjoy the prosperous kingdom. For these warriors have already been slain by Me. Be you but an-instrument thereof, O thou master-bowman, Arjuna.³

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान् ।
मया हतास्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान् ॥

Droṇam ca bhīṣmam ca Jayadratham ca
Karṇam tathā'nyān api yodha-vīrān /
mayā hatāms tvam jahi mā vyathiṣṭhā
yudhyasva jetāsi raṇe sapatnān //34//

Mayā : By me *hatān* : doomed *Droṇam* : Droṇa *ca* : and *Bhīṣmam ca* : and *Bhīṣma Jayadratham ca* : as also *Jayadratha tathā* :

likewise *anyān* : other *yodhavīrān* : brave warriors *api* : too *tvam* : you *jahi* : kill; *mā* : do not *vyathiṣṭhāḥ* : grieve, *yudhyasva* : fight on, *rape* : in battle *sapatnān* : enemies *jetāsi* : you shall conquer.

34. Kill Droṇa and Bhīṣma, Jayadratha and Karna, as also these other heroic warriors, who are already doomed by Me. Fight on, and you shall conquer the enemies in battle.

संजय उवाच

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरिटी ।

नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥ 35 ॥

Saṅjaya uvāca:

Etac chrutvā vacanaṁ Keśavasya

kṛtāñjalir vepamānaḥ Kirītī /

namas-kṛtvā bhūya evāha Kṛṣṇaṁ

sagadgadaṁ bhīta-bhītaḥ praṇamya

||35||

Keśavasya : Of Keśava *etat* : that *vacanam* : word, declaration, *śrūtā* : having heard, *vepamānaḥ* : trembling *Kirītī* : Arjuna *kṛtāñjaliḥ* : with palms joined in salutation *Kṛṣṇam* : Kṛṣṇa *bhūyaḥ* : again and again *namaskṛtvā* : saluting *bhītabhītaḥ* : overwhelmed with awe *praṇamya* : prostrating *sagadgadaṁ* : in a faltering voice *āha* : said.

Saṅjaya said:

35. Hearing this declaration of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, with his frame trembling, saluted Him again and again with joined palms. Prostrating himself before Him in utter awe, Arjuna addressed Him in faltering voice.

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।

रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Sthāne Hṛṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā

jagat prahr̥ṣyaty anurajyate ca /

rakṣāṁsi bhītāni diśo dravanti

sarve namasyanti ca siddhasaṅghāḥ

||36||

Hṛṣīkeṣa : O conqueror of the senses (Kṛṣṇa)! *tava* : Thy *prakīrtyā* : by glorification *jagat* : the world *prahṛēyati* : rejoices, *anurajyate* : delights *ca* : and; *sthāne* : rightly *rakṣāṁsi* : Rākṣasas *bhītāni* : frightened *diśaḥ* : in all directions *dravanti* : flee, *sarve* : all *siddha-saṅghāḥ* : hosts of Siddhas *namasyanti* : bow *ca* : and.

Arjuna said:

36. Rightly do the worlds rejoice and delight in glorifying Thee. In Thy presence the Rākṣasas melt away in fear in all directions, while the hosts of Siddhas bow in adoration.

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन् गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।

अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥ 37 ॥

Kasmāc ca te na nameran mahātman

gariyase brahmaṇo'py ādi-kartre /

ananta dev'eśa jagan-nivāsa

tvam akṣaram sad asat tat-param yat

//37//

Mahātman : O Great One! *gariyase* : greater than all *brahmaṇaḥ* *api* : even of *Brahmā ādikartre* : primal cause *ca* : and *te* : to Thee *kasmāt* : why *na nameran* : should they not bow down? *Ananta* : O Infinite Being *dev'eśa* : O Lord of Gods *jagannivāsa* : O abode of the worlds *sat* : being *asat* : non-being *yat* : which *tat param* : beyond that *akṣaram* : Imperishable Being *tvam* : Thou art.

37. O High-souled one! Why should they not bow down to Thee who art the highest of all beings and the primal cause of even *Brahmā* the creator! O Infinite One! O Lord of all Gods and the Abode of all the worlds! Thou art that Imperishable Being who is both existence (effect condition) and non-existence (causal state) as also that which is beyond them both.⁴

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराणस्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।

वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥ 38 ॥

Tvam ādi-devaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇas

tvam asya viśvasya param nidhānam /

vettā'si vedyam ca param ca dhāma

tvayā tataṁ viśvam anantarūpa

//38//

Tvam : Thou *ādidevaḥ* : the first of divinities *purāṇaḥ* : ancient *puruṣaḥ* : Being ; *tvam* : Thou *asya viśvasya* : of this world *param* : ultimate *nidhānam* : haven of rest ; *vettā* : the knower *vedyam* : the known *ca* : and *param* : supreme *dhāma* : Abode *ca* : and *asi* : art ; *anantārūpa* : O Thou of countless forms *tvayā* : by Thee *viśvam* : the universe *tatam* : pervaded.

38. Thou art the first of all divinities and the most ancient of all beings. Thou art the ultimate haven of rest and safety for the worlds. Thou art both the knower and the known as also the supreme Abode. O Thou of countless forms! By Thee the whole universe is pervaded.

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।

नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः पुनश्च मूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥३९॥

Vāyur Yamo'gnir Varuṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ

Prajāpatis tvam prapitāmahaś ca |

namo namas te'stu sahasra-kṛtvāḥ

punaś ca bhūyo'pi namo namas te.

||39||

Vāyuḥ : Vayu *Yamaḥ* : Yama *Agniḥ* : Agni *Varuṇaḥ* : Varuṇa *Śaśāṅkaḥ* : moon *Prajāpatiḥ* : *Prajāpati prapitāmahaḥ* : *Brahmā's* progenitor *te* : to Thee *sahasrakṛtvāḥ* : a thousand times, *namaḥ* : salutation *namaḥ* : salutation ; *bhūyaḥ api* : again *punaś ca* : and again *te* : to Thee *namaḥ namaḥ* : salutation, salutation.

39. Manifested as *Vāyu* the god of winds, as *Yama* the god of death, as *Varuṇa* the god of the seas, and as the moon with the hare-mark on the face—Thou art the Progenitor of all and the source of him as well. Hail, hail unto Thee a thousand times! Hail, and hail again and yet again.

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।

अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥ ४० ॥

Namaḥ purastād atha prṣṭhatas te

namo'stu te sarvata eva sarva |

ananta-vīry'āmita-vikramas tvam

sarvam samāpnoṣi tato'si sarvaḥ

||40||

Sarva : O All! *purastāt* : in front *prēṭhataḥ* : behind *te* : to Thee *namaḥ* : salutations *astu* : be! *Atha* : in the same way *sarvataḥ eva* : on every side *te* : to Thee *astu* : be! *Anantavīryaḥ* : Infinite in puissance *amīta vikramaḥ* : limitless in might *tvam* : Thou *sarvam* : all *samāpnoṣi* : pervadest, *tataḥ* : therefore *sarvaḥ* : the All *asi* : Thou art.

40. Salutations unto Thee, the All-formed, from before, from behind and from all directions! Infinite in puissance and limitless in might, Thou pervadest everything and Thou art verily the All.

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वाऽपि ॥ 41 ॥

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥ 42 ॥

Sakh'eti matvā prasabham yad uktam
he Kṛṣṇa he Yādava he sakh'eti |
ajānatā mahimānam tav'edaṁ
mayā pramādāt praṇayena vāpi //41//

Yac c'āvahās'ārtham asatkṛto'si
vihāra-śayyāsana-bhojaneṣu |
eko'thavā'py acyuta tat-samakṣam
tat kṣāmaye tvām aham aprameyam //42//

Acyuta : O Thou the undecaying one! *tava* : Thy *idam* : this *mahimānam* : greatness *ajānatā* : not knowing *mayā* : by me *sakhā* : friend *iti* : as *matvā* : thinking *pramādāt* : out of ignorance *praṇayena* : out of love *vā* : or *api* : merely *prasabham* : carelessly *vihāra-śayyāsana-bhojaneṣu* while at play or on bed or on the seat or while feasting *ekaḥ* : alone *athavā* : or *tatsamakṣam* : in the company of others *api* : even *he Kṛṣṇa* : O Kṛṣṇa *he Yādava* : O one of Yādava clan! *he sakhe* : O friend! *iti* : in this way *yat* : what *uktam* : was said *avahāsārtham* : for fun *asatkṛtaḥ* : disrespectfully *asi* : there is, *tat* : that *aprimeyam* : immeasurable *tvām* : to Thee *aham* : I *kṣāmaye* : implore for forgiveness.

41-42. O undecaying One! If, without knowing Thy greatness and taking Thee only to be a friend, I have, out of ignorance or love, alone or even in company, addressed Thee discourteously in fun, while playing, relaxing, sitting or feasting, with words such as, "O Krishna! O Yadava!"—I beseech Thee, O Boundless One, do pardon me for the same.

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुगंरीयान् ।

न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥43

Pitā'si lokasya car'ācarasya-

tvam asya pūjyaś ca gurur gariyān /
na tvat-samo'sty abhyadhikaḥ kuto'nyo
lokā-traye'py apratima prabhāva

||43||

Apratimaprabhāva : O Thou of incomparable puissance! *tvam* : Thou *carācarasya* : of all that is moving and unmoving *asya lokasya* : of this world *pitā* : father *asi* : art; *pūjyaś* : worthy object of worship *guruḥ* : teacher *gariyān* : weightier (than others) *ca* : and (*asi* : art); *lokatraye* : in all the three worlds *tvatsamaḥ* : equal to Thee *api* : even *na asti* : does not exist; *abhyadhikaḥ* : greater *anyaḥ* : another *kutaḥ* : where?

43. Thou art the father of the world—of all that is moving and unmoving. Thou art the object of its worship, the most venerable of its Teachers. In all the worlds there is not another equal to Thee, much less one greater, O Thou of incomparable puissance!

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम् ।

पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥ 44

Tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṁ
prasādaye tvām aham īśam īḍyam /
pit'eva putrasya sakh'eva sakhyuḥ
priyaḥ priyāy'ārhasi deva soḍhum

||44||

Tasmāt : Therefore *aham* : I *īśam* : Lord *īḍhyam* : adorable *tvām* : Thee *kāyam* : body *praṇidhāya* : bending in prostration *praṇamya* : greeting, *prasādaye* : propitiate; *putrasya* : of the son *pitā* : father, *sakhyuḥ* : of the friend *sakhā* : friend *iva* : as, *priyāyāḥ* : of the beloved *priyaḥ* : lover *iva* : as, *deva* : O Lord! *soḍhum* : to bear *arhasi* : deservest.

44. Therefore greeting Thee with my body stretched in prostration, I beseech Thee, O worshipful Lord, to be gracious unto me. Bear with me as a father with a son, as a friend with a friend, and as a lover with his beloved.

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।
तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ 45 ॥

Adṛṣṭa-pūrvam hr̥ṣito'smi dr̥ṣṭvā
bhayena ca pravyathitaṁ mano me /
'ad eva me darśaya deva rūpaṁ
prasīda dev'eśa jagan-nivāsa //45//

Adṛṣṭapūrvam (rūpaṁ) : A form that has never been seen before *dr̥ṣṭvā* : seeing *hr̥ṣitaḥ asmi* : I am overjoyed; *bhayena* : by fear *ca* : also *me* : my *manah* : mind *pravyathitaṁ* : perturbed; *deva* : O Lord! *tat* : that other *eva* : only *rūpaṁ* : form *me* : to me *darśaya* : reveal, *deveśa* : O God of gods, *jagannivāsa* : O Indwelling spirit of the world! *prasīda* : be propitious.

45. Seeing this form unseen before, I am overjoyed but my mind is also perturbed with fear. Reveal to me that other familiar form of Thine and be gracious unto me, O Thou God of all gods, and Indwelling Spirit of the worlds.⁵

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्तमिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव ।
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥ 46 ॥

Kirīṭinaṁ gadinam cakra-hastam
icchāmi tvāṁ draṣṭum ahaṁ tath'aiva /
ten'aiva rūpeṇa catur-bhujena
sahasra-bāho bhava viśva-mūrte //46//

Tathā eva : In the same way *Kirīṭinam* : with a diadem *gadinam* : with mace *cakrahaṣṭam* : with discus in hand *tvām* : Thee *draṣṭum* : to see *aham* : I *icchāmi* : desire, *sahasra bāho* : O Thou the thousand armed! *viśvamūrte* : O Thou of universal form! *tenaiva* : in that *caturbhujena* : four-armed *rūpeṇa* : form *bhava* : become.

46. I desire to see Thee as before crowned with a diadem, and holding a mace and discus in hand. Deign to assume that four-armed shape, O Thou of a thousand arms and of universal form!

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।

तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥ 47 ॥

Śri Bhagavān uvāca:

Mayā prasannena tav'ārjun'edaṁ
rūpaṁ paraṁ darśitaṁ ātmayogāt /
tejomayaṁ viśvaṁ anantaṁ ādyam
yan me tvad-anyaṇa na dṛṣṭa-pūrvam //47//

Tejomayaṁ : Of pure brilliance *viśvaṁ* : all-inclusive *anantaṁ* : infinite *ādyam* : primeval *tvadanyena* : any one other than you *na dṛṣṭa-pūrvam* : unseen before me : My *idaṁ paraṁ rūpaṁ* : this transcendent form, *yaḥ* : which, *Arjuna* : O Arjuna! (*taḥ rūpaṁ* : that form) *prasannena* : graciously inclined *mayā* : by Me *ātmayogāt* : by divine power *tava* : for you *darśitaṁ* : shown.

The Blessed Lord said:

47. Out of My grace, I have, by My divine power, revealed to you this transcendent form of Mine—infinite, primeval, radiant and all-inclusive. Never has it been seen by any one before except by you.

न वेद्यज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानैर्न च क्रियाभिरन तपोभिर्ग्रैः ।

एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ 48 ॥

Na veda-yajñ'ādhyayanair na dānair
na ca kriyābhir na tapobhir ugraiḥ /
evaṁ-rūpaḥ śakya ahaṁ nr-loke
draṣṭum tvad-anyaṇa Kurupravīra //48//.

Kurupravira : O Thou the most heroic among the Kurus! *Vedayaj-
nādhyanaiḥ* : by the study and practice of the Vedas and sacrifices
evam rūpaḥ : in such form *aham* : I *ṇloke* : in the world of men
tvadanyena : by any one other than you *na draṣṭum śakyaḥ* : not
possible to be seen; *na dānaiḥ* : nor by charity *na kriyābhiḥ* : nor
by rituals *na ugraiḥ tapobhiḥ* : nor by severe austerities *ca* : and.

48. Except by you (on whom My grace has been bestowed),
none in this world could see Me in this Cosmic Form—be
it by Vedic study, by sacrifice, by good works, by rituals,
or by severe austerities.

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम् ।
व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥ 49 ॥

Mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍha-bhāvo
dr̥ṣṭvā rūpaṁ ghoram idṛṅ mama'edam /
vyapeta-bhīḥ prīta-manāḥ punas tvam
tad eva me rūpaṁ idam prapaśya //49//

Idṛk : In this way *ghoram* : awe-inspiring *mama* : My *idam* : this
rūpaṁ : form *dr̥ṣṭvā* : seeing *te* : for you *vyathā* : fear *mā* : not,
vimūḍhabhāvaḥ : bewilderment *ca* : and *mā* : not; *tvam* : you
vyapetabhīḥ : with fear assuaged *prītamanāḥ* : with a joyful heart
me : My *tat* : that *idam rūpaṁ eva* : this form (the ordinary form)
punaḥ : again *paśya* : see.

49. Fear not; nor be bewildered at seeing this awe-inspiring
form of Mine. With fear assuaged and a heart full of joy,
behold now this, my familiar form, again!

संजय उवाच

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥50॥

Sañjaya uvāca :

Ity Arjunaṁ Vāsudevas tath'oktvā
svakaṁ rūpaṁ darśayāmāsa bhūyaḥ /
aśvāsayāmāsa ca bhītaṁ enaṁ
bhūtvā punaḥ saumya-vapur mah'ātmā //50//

Vāsudevaḥ : Vāsudeva *Arjunam* : to Arjuna *iti* : thus *uktvā* : saying *tathā* : accordingly *svakaṁ rūpam* : own usual form *bhūyaḥ* : again *darśayāmāsa* : revealed; *mahātmā* : the exalted one; *saumyavapuḥ* : serene form *bhūtvā* : becoming *bhītam* : awestruck *enam* : him *punaḥ* : again *āśvāsayāmāsa* : comforted.

Sanjaya said:

50. Saying thus to Arjuna, Krishna revealed again his own familiar form. Having thus assumed that gentle form, the Exalted One comforted the awe-struck Arjuna over again.

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।

इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥ 51 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

Drṣṭv'edaṁ mānuṣaṁ rūpaṁ tava saumyaṁ janārdana /
idānīm asmi samvṛttaḥ sacetāḥ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ //51//

Janārdana : O Janārdana! *Tava* : Thy *idam* : this *saumyam* : serene *mānuṣam* : human *rūpam* : form *drṣṭvā* : seeing *idānīm* : now *sacetāḥ* : one with balance of mind recovered *prakṛtiṁ gataḥ* : one attained to one's natural state *samvṛttaḥ asmi* : become.

Arjuna said:

51. Seeing this gentle human form of Thine, O Janārdana, I am now composed and restored to my natural state of mind.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।

देवा अप्यस्या रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ॥ 52 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

Sudurdarśam idaṁ rūpaṁ drṣṭavān asi yan mama /
devā apy asya rūpasya nityaṁ darśana-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ //52//

Mama : My *yat* : which *rūpam* : form *dr̥ṣṭavān asi* : you have seen (*tat* : that) *idam* : this *sudurdar̥ṣam* : is extremely difficult to see; *devāḥ* : the Devas *api* : even *nityam* : always *asya rūpasya* : of this form *dar̥ṣanakāṅkṣiṇaḥ* : are desirous of seeing.

The Blessed Lord said:

52. This form of Mine which you have seen is extremely difficult to behold. Even Devas themselves are ever eager to see it.

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।

शक्य एवविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥ 53 ॥

N'āham vedair na tapasā na dānena na c'ejyayā /
śakya evaṁ-vidho draṣṭum dr̥ṣṭavān asi mām yathā //53//

Mām : Me *yathā* : in which way *dr̥ṣṭavān asi* : you have seen, *evaṁ vidhāḥ* : in that way *aham* : I *vedaiḥ* : by Vedas *na* : nor *tapasā* : by austerities *na* : nor *dānena* : by charities *ijyayā* : by sacrifices *ca* : and *na* : not *draṣṭum* : to be seen *śakyaḥ* : possible.

53. Neither by Vedic study, nor by austerities, nor by charities, nor by sacrifices could one behold Me in the way you have done ⁶

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवविधोऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥ 54 ॥

Bhaktyā tv'ananyayā śakya aham evaṁ-vidho'rjuna /
jñātum draṣṭum ca tattvena praveṣṭum ca paramtapa //54//

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *Paramtapa* : O scorcher of enemies! *evaṁ vidhāḥ* : in this way *aham* : I *tattvena jñātum* : to be known in my true nature *draṣṭum* : to be seen *praveṣṭum* : to be entered into *ca* : and *ananyayā* : by unswerving *bhaktyā* : devotion *tu* : but *śakyaḥ* : possible.

54. But, O Arjuna, Thou great warrior! Through unswerving devotion this form of Mine may be known in truth and in reality, may be experienced and entered into.

मत्कर्मकुन्मत्परमो भङ्गकः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ 55 ॥

*Mat-karma-kṛn mat-puramo mad-bhaktah saṅga-varjitah /
nirvairah sarva-bhūteṣu yah sa mām eti Pāṇḍava* //55//

Pāṇḍava : O Son of Pāṇḍu! *matkarmakṛt* : one doing My work
matparamah : one looking upon Me as the goal *madbhaktah* :
My devotee *sangavarjitah* : one without attachments *sarvabhūteṣu* :
towards all creatures *nirvairah* : one without antagonism *yah* : who-
ever *saḥ* : he *mām* : Me *eti* : goes to.

55. Whoever works for Me, looking upon Me as the goal; whoever is My devotee, free from attachments and from antagonism to any being—such a man, O son of Pāṇḍu, shall enter into Me.⁷

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगो
नामैकादशोऽध्यायः ॥ 11 ॥

NOTES

1.Vr.2: That greatness specially consists in the fact that it knows no decay i.e., the Lord is not in any way affected by creating, preserving and dissolving this unimaginably vast and mysterious universe by Himself and out of Himself. Any material substance, when something is made out of it, suffers decay to that extent. So also any agent gets affected and exhausted through endless effort. But the Lord is not. That is His unique greatness.

2.Vr.13: In this idea, that the whole of the manifested universe is the body of God, the metaphysical support of devotional philosophy is clearly stated. The relation between the Lord and the universe is the crux of the Vedantic metaphysics. Pure non-dualism

holds that the universe is not actually there but only seems to be so like the snake in a rope seen in a visual illusion. Qualified monism holds that the world is real, and that, though separate from Him, it still forms a unity with Him as His body. In some systems, in place of body, it is called manifestation of His Sakti or Power, which is intimately related to Him and is one with Him as light and heat are with the sun. This comes under the doctrine of identity-in-difference. Pure dualism would have the universe as completely separate from Him, but having only the status of an existence dependent on Him. Devotion requires an object to love and to adore, which is at the same time very close to one, and is responsive to prayer and love. So a devotional philosophy requires to posit a distinction without a difference between God and the manifested universe, which includes the Jivas or centres of consciousness also. Therefore, the *Gītā*, being essentially a devotional text of the Bhāgavata tradition, highlights this relation of body-soul between the universe and God in this chapter, which marks the climax of its teachings.

3.Vr.33: This idea "Be Thou but an instrument" marks the acme of the *Gītā* teachings. It states the changed outlook of a mind that has had the illumination that the Cosmic Vision brings. An unilluminated mind is ego-centred, and works with the sense of agency and with an eye on the fruits of actions. The *Gītā*, to start with, teaches that a spiritual aspirant should work, offering all the merits of his works to God. And as far as the material fruits of work are concerned, he should not make that the motive power of his action. He should be moved by a sense of duty, and the material reward he gets must be only a secondary consideration, not affecting the quality of his work. One must feel that the Lord is the Master and oneself is His servant, and that the work one does is for His sake and His satisfaction. This is what the *Gītā* describes as "being devoted to My work" (11.55) and "abandonment of all the fruits of one's actions" (18.2).

But here the aspirant still has the feeling that he is the doer. In other words, he retains the sense of agency. The illumination of the type that Arjuna gets, establishes the aspirant in the truth that the Lord's will is the only working force in the universe and that all the individual wills, which in ignorance appropriate for themselves the agency of the work done apparently by themselves, are

really accomplished by that Supreme Will. The individual concerned is only an occasion. To illustrate it, consider an old building that has lost all strength and is on the point of dilapidation. A strong wind comes and brings down the building. Here the wind is only an occasion, whereas the natural processes that have worked all through the ages are the real cause. Another illustration is of a factory. The main shaft is moved by the power of steam coming from the boiler. Moved by that power, the various cogs in the big workshop are functioning, but to an onlooker they seem to work independently. Such a view is wrong, the fact being that the power from the source is the real agency and all the cogs are but its instruments.

To have a view of the Total is illumination and liberation. To be restricted to the ego-centred view, is ignorance and bondage. Surrender to the Divine means the abandonment of this false view and surrendering the agentship also to Him, besides the fruits. Strictly speaking, the agentship has also been with Him always, but it is falsely appropriated to oneself by the ignorant man. Surrender strictly means only this recognition. And it is this recognition that comes to Arjuna on his experiencing the cosmic form of the Lord.

The all-comprehensive dominance of the Divine will can be illustrated also by the example of a living body. The living body of a man has several millions of cells. Each cell has an individuality and a function. The cells of the heart, the cells of the digestive system, the cells of the brain, the cells of the muscles etc., all carry on different activities individually and collectively. But in spite of the distinctiveness in entity and function of the cells, they are all sharers of the total energy of the organism, and they are functioning for the ego tenanted that organism. They live and function by, and for, that ego, and separated from it they have no meaning and they perish. If any of those cells considers its individuality as independence and seeks to function independently, it becomes a cancerous cell and perishes. The individuality of the Jiva and its freedom are only like this. The Divine will alone functions in the whole universe, which is His body, as it were, and all individuals derive their power from His will, and exist and function for His purpose. The recognition of this is to become a mere instrument or occasion—*nimitta-mātram*—for His functioning.

This is perfect self-surrender wherein not only the fruits of works are surrendered, but even the agentship. In Bhakti therefore the Jiva becomes one with the Lord in point of will, just as in Jñāna, he becomes one with Him in being. And since 'will' and 'being' cannot be separated in God, both these disciplines carry one to the same end. They can both be self-sufficient disciplines.

4.Vr.37: In the Verse 19 of the 9th Chapter (see note 12 of that Chapter) the Lord described Himself as *Sadasaccāhamarjuna*—I am both being and non-being, O Arjuna. Here He is spoken of as *Sat* (being) and *Asat* (non-being) and what is beyond them both. By *Sat* and *Asat* here are meant what is manifest and unmanifest. What is unmanifest need not be non-existent, but can be latent and unperceived. A tree is invisible in a seed, but it is latent as the seminal or causal condition. Here in Arjuna's vision the whole universe is seen as spread out in the body of God. This is the manifest condition, which lasts till the Kalpa is over. When the Kalpa ends and the Pralaya sets in, the manifest universe dissolves into the latent condition as the tree does into the seeds. This unmanifest latent condition is here called *Asat* or non-existence, in the sense that none can perceive it, being latent.

When God is spoken of as both *Sat* and *Asat*, what is meant is that these two conditions are his adjuncts, and that His existence is ordinarily understood by man in His relation to these adjuncts. For, man understands God as the creator and the cause of the universe. He cannot form any notion of Him, except in this relative sense, just as the word father cannot be understood except in relation to a son. But he has an identity apart from the one related to the universe in its latent and patent conditions and that is indicated by the expression "What is beyond"—*tat param*. If this is not granted, God can as well turn out to be an existence dependent on the manifested world. It is the universe that is dependent on God and not vice versa. The idea of *tat param* is necessary to secure this.

5.Vr.45: Three types of feelings overcome Arjuna's mind on seeing the Cosmic Form of the Lord, as Time the destroyer. These are joy, fear and perturbation. It is difficult to understand why a divine vision causes fear in the mind of even a hero like Arjuna,

making him pray for its withdrawal. It can be understood only if we accept that Arjuna's mind is not fully prepared as yet for it. Before the life of ego-centred consciousness is transcended, one has to pass through the experience of Kāla or Kālī, the all-consuming Time, which is Death. So long as the ego clings to itself, it is afraid to face Death in all her stark nakedness. A parallel to Arjuna's experience one finds in the life of the modern Incarnation Sri Ramakrishna, in his relation to his disciple Naren, who became Swami Vivekananda afterwards. Just as Sri Kṛṣṇa gave the divine eye to Arjuna to perceive the Cosmic Whole, Sri Ramakrishna by the exercise of his will wanted to give that climatic experience to Narendra. When Naren began to experience the whole universe dissolving into its elements and his own ego too being blasted, he felt terribly frightened like Arjuna and cried out. "What is happening to me! I have a father and a mother." Then the Master, finding Naren not yet ready for the experience, withdrew it from his consciousness. Similar experiences are recorded of other saints too.

Spiritual experience may be compared to an electric current of very high voltage. Suppose it is passed through a machine that can stand only 250 volts. Then the machine, unable to stand it, will break. Man's gross and subtle bodies must be prepared to stand it. To use a technical terminology, they must become highly Sāttvika. Until this condition is fulfilled wise Providence keeps human consciousness insulated from these experiences.

6.Vrs.53-54: In these verses is given an uncompromising statement of the self-sufficiency of Bhakti for the highest spiritual attainment. It is not a mere subordinate discipline for gaining what some call *cittaśuddhi* (purification of the mind); to be abandoned in preference to a more advanced discipline which is called *jñāna-niṣṭhā*, considered the direct establishment in non-dual understanding, and thus the immediate means of spiritual enlightenment. To a devotee with unswerving devotion, it is stated that the Lord bestows the awakening from the life of ignorance. He is then said to enter into Him i.e., his ego is dissipated and he becomes an unobstructed part and parcel of the Divine Life.

7.Vr.55: The way for the achievement of this is stated very briefly, but pointedly and exhaustively, in this verse. A devotee

is asked to serve Him alone as the Master and work whole-heartedly for Him. The servant may work faithfully for the master, but he does not look upon the latter as the highest. But a devotee sees in God the highest and the most precious of all beings. Such a person alone deserves the name of a Bhakta or devotee. He will have no attachments in work, and he will have no enmity to anyone, as he sees all as the children of God. This is an introduction to the next chapter, where the ideals of Bhakti are highlighted.

Chapter XII

भक्तियोगः

BHAKTI-YOGA

COMMUNION THROUGH LOVING DEVOTION

SUMMARY

The Impersonal and the Personal: (1-7) Arjuna now wants to know who is a better Yogi—the one who follows the path of devotion, looking upon God as the Supreme Person, or the one who looks upon Him as the Impersonal Absolute. Sri Krishna answers: All who worship Me with intense faith and adore Me, are praiseworthy. Of the two paths, that of the Impersonal Absolute is too difficult for men who are entrenched in body-consciousness. Besides, in this path one has to depend on one's effort alone. The devotee has the advantage that, as he depends on Me and not on his effort alone, I am always at his back to lift him out of the ocean of Samsāra.

The Practice of Devotion: (8-12) Therefore let men practise whole-hearted devotion to Me. If their mind does not automatically flow towards Me, they can try Yoga practices and gain concentration. If they cannot do that, they can engage themselves in works that are devoted to Me and are pleasing to Me. If even that is not possible, let them abandon the fruits of all works to Me. Such abandonment in truth and in reality is very potent; for it can bring peace instantaneously.

Who is a Bhakta?: (13-20) The qualities of an ideal Bhakta are then described. It can be studied in comparison with the ideal of the *Sthitaprajña* described in Ch. II, 55. He is a friend of all,

free from self-centredness, unaffected by vanity and pride, ever cheerful, patient in all circumstances and situations, firm in his resolves, absolutely self-surrendered to the Lord, attracting the love and affection of all, unperturbed, pure, indifferent to worldly values, devoid of the feeling that he is the doer of anything, alike to friend and foe, alike in praise and insult, and looking on the whole world as his home.

अर्जुन उवाच

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।

ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ 1 ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

*Evam satata-yuktā ye bhaktās tvām paryupāsate /
ye c'āpyakṣaram avyaktam teṣām ke yoga-vittamāḥ* //1//

Evam : In this way *satatayuktāḥ* : ever-steadfast *ye* : who *bhaktāḥ* : devotees *tvām* : Thee *upāsate* : worship, *ye* : who *ca* : and *api* : again *akṣaram avyaktam* : the Imperishable Unmanifest (*upāsate* : worship), *teṣām* : of them *ke* : who *yogavittamāḥ* : greater knowers of Yoga.

Arjuna said:

1. There are Thy ever-steadfast devotees who love and worship Thee in the above way (as the Divine Person); there are again others who contemplate on Thee as the Imperishable Unmanifest (Impersonal Absolute)—which of these has a greater understanding of Yoga.¹

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ 2 ॥

Śrī bhagavān uvāca:

*Mayy āveśya mano ye mām nitya-yuktā upāsate /
śraddhayā paray'opetās te me yuktatamā matāḥ* //2//

Mayi : In Me *manaḥ* : mind *āveśya* : fixing *nityayuktāḥ* : ever steadfast *parayā śraddhayā* : with absolute faith *upetāḥ* : endowed with *ye* : who *mām* : Me *upāsate* : worship, *te* : they *yuktatamāḥ* : most perfect in Yoga, *me* : My *mataḥ* : I consider.

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Those I consider as the most perfect in Yoga, who, with their minds fixed intently on Me in steadfast love, worship Me with absolute faith.²

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ 3 ॥
संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ 4 ॥

Ye tv akṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktam paryupāsate /
sarvatragam acintyam ca kūṭa-stham acalam dhruvam ||3||

Samniyamya'endriya-grāmaṁ sarvatra sama-buddhayaḥ /
te prāpnuvanti mām eva sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ ||4||

Indriya-grāmaṁ : The aggregate of the senses *saṁniyamya* : controlling, *sarvatra* : in all conditions *samabuddhayaḥ* : even-minded, *sarvabhūtahite* : in the welfare of all beings *ratāḥ* : mindful *ye* : who *tu* : but *anirdeśyam* : the undefinable *avyaktam* : the unmanifested *acintyam* : the unthinkable or transcendent *kūṭastham* : the firm support of the world *acalam* : the motionless *dhruvam* : the eternal *sarvatragam* : the all-pervading *ca* : and *akṣaram* : the imperishable (i.e., the Impersonal Absolute) *paryupāsate* : worship, *te* : they *mām* : Me *eva* : alone *prāpnuvanti* : attain.

3-4. Those who are devoted to the Imperishable (the Impersonal Absolute),—who is the firm support of the world and is also undefinable, unmanifested, transcendent, motionless, eternal and all-pervading—even they reach Me alone, striving with their senses controlled, and with mind tranquillised and set on the welfare of all.³

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ 5 ॥

Kleśo'dhikataras teṣāṁ avyakt'āsakta-cetasām /

avyaktā hi gatiṛ duḥkhaṁ dehavadbhir avāpyate

||5||

Avyaktāsakta-cetasām teṣāṁ : Of those whose mind clings to the Unmanifested (i.e., the Impersonal Absolute) *kleśaḥ* : difficulty *adhikatarāḥ* : is greater; *hi* : for *avyaktā gatiḥ* : the way of an unclear ideal i.e., the Absolute *dehavadbhiḥ* : for the embodied i.e., the body-centred *duḥkham* : with difficulty *avāpyate* : is attained.

5. The obstacles facing those devoted to the Impersonal Absolute are far greater; for the way of an unclear ideal is difficult for an embodied being (the body-centred man) to understand or follow.⁴

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।

अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ 6 ॥

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।

भवामि न चिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ 7 ॥

Ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi samnyasya mat-parāḥ /

ananyen'aiva yogena mām dhyāyanta upāsate—

||6||

Teṣāṁ ahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt /

bhavāmi nacirāt Pārtha mayy āveśita-cetasām

||7||

Pārtha : O son of Prthā *ye* : whoever *tu* : but *sarvāṇi* : all *karmāṇi* : actions (along with sense of agency) *mayi* : in Me *samnyasya* : abandoning, resigning *matparāḥ* : taking refuge in Me as the Supreme *ananyena yogena eva* : by communion through love that knows not other objects to love *mām* : Me *dhyāyantaḥ* : meditating *upāsate* : worship, *mayi* : in Me *āveśitacetasām* : whose minds are firmly set *teṣāṁ* : of those *aham* : I *nacirāt* : soon *mṛtyu-saṁsārasāgarāt* : from the ocean of worldly existence characterised by death *samuddhartā* : saviour *bhavāmi* : I become.

6-7. But, O son of Pṛthā, soon will I lift from this ocean of death-bound worldly existence, those whose minds are ever set on Me—those who abandon to Me the fruits of all their actions together with the sense of agency thereof, and who worship Me, meditating on Me as their sole refuge and their only love.⁵

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।

निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ 8 ॥

Mayy eva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya /
nivasiṣyasi mayy eva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ //8//

Mayi eva : In Me alone *manaḥ* : mind *ādhatsva* : fix, *mayi* : in Me *buddhiṁ* : reason, or understanding *niveśaya* : let penetrate; *ataḥ ūrdhvaṁ* : thereafter *mayi* : in Me *eva* : alone *nivasiṣyasi* : you will live; *na saṁśayaḥ* : there is no doubt about it.

8. Fix your mind on Me alone; let your reason penetrate into Me; without doubt you will then abide in Me alone for ever more.⁶

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।

अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनंजय ॥ 9 ॥

Atha cittam samādhātum na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram /
abhyāsa-yogena tato mām icch'āptum Dhanañjaya //9//

Dhanañjaya : O Arjuna! *atha* : if *cittam* : mind *mayi* : in Me *sthiram* : steadily *samādhātum* : to fix *na śaknoṣi* : unable, *tataḥ* : then *abhyāsa-yogena* : by practice of concentration *mām* : Me *āptum* : to reach *iccha* : seek.

9. If you are unable to fix your mind steadily on Me (even at the start) then try to reach Me through the systematic practice of concentration.

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 10 ॥

Abhyāse'py asamartho'si mat-karma-paramo bhava /
mad-artham api karmāṇi kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi //10//

Abhyāse : In the systematic practice of concentration *api* : even
asamarthaḥ : incapable *asi* : are, *matkarmaparamaḥ* : one having
My work as one's highest aim *bhava* : you be; *madartham* : for My
sake *karmāṇi* : works *kurvan* : doing *siddhim* : perfection *avāpsyasi* :
will attain.

10. If you are not capable of practising systematic concentration, then devote yourself wholeheartedly to works of service to Me (consisting in external worship and discharge of duties for My sake). Thus working for Me, man can attain to perfection.

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ 11 ॥

Ath'aitad apy aśakto'si kartum mad-yogam āśritah /
sarva-karma-phala tyāgam tataḥ kuru yat'ātmavān //11//

Atha : If then *etat api* : even that *kartum* : to perform *aśaktaḥ*
asi : you are incapable, *tataḥ* : then *madyogamāśritah* : one taking
refuge in Me *yat'ātmavān* : one become self-controlled *sarvakarma-*
phalatyāgam : surrender of the fruits of all action to Me *kuru* :
perform.

11. If even this is too difficult for you to perform, then taking refuge in Me and thus controlling the mind, give up the fruits of all your actions (recognising Me as their agent and enjoyer).

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ 12 ॥

Śreya hi jñānam abhyāsāt jñānād dhyānaṁ viśiṣyate /
dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas tyāgāc chāntir anantaram //12//

Abhyāsāt : Than (mechanical) practice of disciplines *jñānam* : knowledge, philosophic understanding *śreyāḥ* : superior *hi* : indeed; *jñānāt* : than intellectual knowledge *dhyānam* : meditation *viśiṣyate* : excels; *dhyānāt* : than meditation *karmaphala-tyāgam* : abandoning the fruits of all actions *śreyāḥ* : superior; *tyāgāt* : from renunciation *anantaram* : after *śāntiḥ* : peace.

12. Than (a mere formal) practice of disciplines, a clear intellectual understanding (of the doctrine) is better. Than such understanding, meditation is better. Even better than meditation is the abandonment of the fruits of action. For, such abandonment (of the fruits of works and sense of their agency) is immediately followed by peace.⁷

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ॥
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ 13 ॥

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 14 ॥

Adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānām maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca /
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣamī //13//

santuṣṭaḥ satatam yogī yat'ātmā dṛḍha-niścayaḥ /
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ //14//

Sarvabhūtānām : Towards all beings *adveṣṭā* : without enmity; *maitraḥ* : friendly *karuṇaḥ* : compassionate *eva* : also *ca* : and *nirmamaḥ* : without the sense of mine *nirahaṅkāraḥ* : without the sense of 'I', *samaduḥkha-sukhaḥ* : alike in happiness and misery, *kṣamī* : having forbearance, *satatam* : always *santuṣṭaḥ* : content *yogī* : contemplative *yat'ātmā* : self-controlled *dṛḍhaniścayaḥ* : firm in conviction, *mayi* : in Me *arpitamanobuddhiḥ* : with mind and understanding dedicated *madbhaktaḥ* : My devotee *yaḥ* : who, *saḥ* : he *ca* : and *me priyaḥ* : dear to Me.

13-14. Friendly and compassionate to all and without any touch of hatred; devoid of possessiveness and arrogance; ever content and contemplative; alike in happiness and misery;

self-controlled and firm in conviction; dedicated to Me with all his heart and all his soul—dear to Me is a man who is thus devoted.⁸

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकाच्चोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ 15 ॥

Yasmān n'odvijate loko lokān n'odvijate ca yaḥ /
harṣ'āmarṣa-bhay'odvegair mukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ //15//

Yasmāt : From (due to), whom *lokaḥ* : the world *na udvijate* : is not agitated by fear, *yaḥ* : who *lokāt* : by the world *na udvijate* : is not agitated *ca* : and *harṣāmarṣa-bhayodvegaiḥ* : mental agitation caused by euphoria or anger or fear or excitement *yaḥ* : who *muktaḥ* : is free, *saḥ* : he *ca* : too *me priyaḥ* : dear to Me.

15. Who causes fear to none and whom none can frighten, who is thus free from the agitation of the moods caused by euphoria, anger, and excitement—such a person too is dear to Me.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 16 ॥

Anapekṣaḥ śucir dakṣa udāsīno gata-vyathaḥ /
sarvārambha-parityāgī yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ //16//

Anapekṣaḥ : Desireless, *śuciḥ* : pure, *dakṣaḥ* : resourceful, *udāsīnaḥ* : unattached, *gatavyathaḥ* : free from all worries, *sarvārambha-parityāgī* : one who has abandoned all efforts i.e., without any sense of self-centred agency, *madbhaktaḥ* : My devotee *yaḥ* : who, *saḥ* : he *me* : to Me *priyaḥ* : is dear.

16. Desireless, pure, resourceful, unattached, unworried and without any sense of self-centred agency—a devotee thus endowed is dear to Me.

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥ 17 ॥

Yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati /
śubh'āsubha-parityāgī bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ //17//

Yaḥ : Who *na hr̥ṣyati* : exults not, *na dveṣṭi* : is free from anger, *na śocati* : is free from sorrow, *na kāṅkṣati* : is free from desire, *yaḥ* : who *śubh'āsubha-parityāgī* : abandons the pleasant and the unpleasant alike *bhaktimān* : one endowed with devotion, *saḥ* : he *me* : to Me *priyaḥ* : dear.

17. He who is free from elation, anger, sorrow, and craving, who neither seeks the pleasant nor shuns the unpleasant—dear to Me is the man who is thus devoted.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ 18 ॥

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।

अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान् मे प्रियो नरः ॥ 19 ॥

Samah śatrau ca mitre ca tathā māt'āpamānayoḥ /
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu samah saṅga-vivarjitaḥ //18//

Tulya-nindā-stutir maunī saṁtuṣṭo yena kenacit /
aniketaḥ sthira-matir bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ //19//

Śatrau : Towards the enemy *ca* : and *mitre* : towards friend *ca* : and, *tathā* : in the same way *māt'āpamānayoḥ* : in honour and in insult *samah* : alike, *śītoṣṇa sukha-duḥkheṣu* : in sufferings caused by heat and cold *samah* : alike, *saṅgavivarjitaḥ* : without attachment *tulyanindāstutiḥ* : alike in praise and blame, *maunī* : silent, *yena-kenacit* : with anything *saṁtuṣṭaḥ* : satisfied, *aniketaḥ* : without a permanent home, *sthiramatiḥ* : with a strong mind *bhaktimān* : a devotee *naraḥ* : man *me* : to Me *priyaḥ* : dear.

18-19. Alike to friend and foe, alike in honour and insult, alike in heat and cold, alike in praise and blame—unattached, contented, homeless, and steady in mind—dear to Me is a man who is thus devoted.

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।

श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ 20 ॥

Ye tu dharmyāmṛtam idam yathoktam paryupāsate /
śraddadhānā mat-paramā bhaktās te'tīva me priyāḥ //20//

Yathoktam : Thus set forth *idam* : this *dharmyāmṛtam* virtuous path to immortality *śraddadhānāḥ* : endowed with faith *matparamāḥ* : regarding Me as the Supreme Goal *ye tu* : even whoever *paryupāsate* : seek to practise, *te bhaktāḥ* : such devotees *me* : to Me *atīva priyāḥ* : are exceedingly dear.

20. Whosoever even seek to follow the virtuous path to Immortality thus set forth, with a mind full of faith and acceptance of Me as their supreme goal—exceedingly dear to Me are men who are thus devoted.

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे भक्तियोगो
नाम द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥ 12 ॥

NOTES

1. Vr.1: Pointed comparison and contrast between the paths of Bhakti and of Jñāna are here made in these words of Arjuna. An estimate of their comparative relevance in the life of ordinary man is also given. As for the ideals of Bhakti, reference is made to them in the concluding verses of the last chapter (eleven). It was also discussed in chapter X 9-11. Reference to that which is eternal and unmanifest (*śānātanaḥ* and *avyaktaḥ*), different

from 'the other unmanifest', i.e., the changeful unmanifest, or Prakṛti in the state of dissolution, is made in VIII. 20. The 'eternal and unmanifest' of the first kind is also described as *Akṣaram* or the Imperishable in the very next verse of the same chapter. These two terms *Akṣara* and *Avyakta* are used here to denote the Impersonal Absolute, the pursuit of which is contrasted with that of loving devotion to the Supreme Being as Person; and a pointed question is asked as to which is better, taking both these paths as distinct. Here *Bhakti* is not treated as a feeder to *Jñāna*, but as in itself self-sufficient. All attempts at trying to prove the contrary by quoting from different contexts, are frustrated by this one chapter which is unequivocal in its meaning. *Kṛṣṇa* also gives a clear answer to the questions in the next verse.

2. *Vr.2*: The clear and unequivocal answer given by the Lord is that He considers a true lover of God (*Bhakta*) as more perfect in spiritual communion. As against this, it is only interpretative high-handedness to say that the *Bhakti* discipline forms only a handmaid of the *Jñāna* discipline. At least the doctrine of the *Gītā* is that both these are self-sufficient spiritual disciplines, that neither need be subordinated to the other, and that in the end they take the spiritual pilgrim to the same Supreme Being. Thus though in the end they are the same, *Bhakti* has got its special excellences. What they are, will be stated in the next few verses.

3. *Vrs.3-4*: The ideal pursued (the Impersonal Absolute) and the means adopted in the path of *Jñāna* are described by various expressions of a very abstract nature. Some of these expressions have already been used to convey the idea of the Impersonal Absolute. They are: *Akṣaram* or the Imperishable and *Avyaktam* or the Unmanifest. In VIII. 3 it is said: *Akṣaram brahma paramam*—the Supreme Brahman is meant by *Akṣara*. In VIII. 21 it is identified with *Avyakta*, the Unmanifest—*Avyakto'kṣara ityuktaḥ*. In XI. 18 *Kṛṣṇa* is praised by *Arjuna* as *Akṣaram*. Later in XV. 16 the expressions *Ķṣara*, *Akṣara* and *Kūṭastha* are used to indicate the Supreme Being and His manifestations.

The epithet *Kūṭastha* is a very intriguing word, as it is used in many places in the *Gītā* with different meanings. In VI.8 it is used to describe the unperturbed state of mind of a *Yogi* whereas here it is used to describe the Impersonal Absolute. The literal meaning

of the word is 'one standing on a peak'—which means aloof and unaffected by all surroundings—on a firm foundation. So it gives the combined sense of firmness, aloofness and stability. A totally different meaning also is given for it as follows: *Kūṭam* means 'crooked' or something that appears good and attractive but is really defective. It can therefore be applied to *Māyā*, the false world of appearances which ultimately causes suffering and death. So the word is interpreted to mean that which is the support of this world of falsity (*Māyā*). cf. *Gītā* Verses 6, 7; 15, 16.

It is stated in these verses that the man of knowledge who contemplates on the Impersonal Absolute attains to the same goal as the devotee who has deep and unswerving love of God and devotes himself to work for His sake and adores Him. So from the point of view of the end, Arjuna's question as to which is preferable has no meaning. It becomes relevant from the point of view of practicality, as explained in the next verse.

4. *Vr.5*: The difficulty in the path of the Impersonal Absolute is described as the state of 'embodiedness'. It is impossible to conceive of any spiritual aspirant who is not an 'embodied being'. So the expression means only 'one on whom body-consciousness is very strong'. There may be *Jīvan-muktas* (those liberated in life) who are not body-conscious, but few aspirants can really be so. So the demand for this qualification excludes ninety nine percent of aspirants from this path. In addition to the handicap of body-consciousness, there is another great disadvantage in this path, which will be clearly stated by the Lord in the next verses. The disadvantage consists in that, that such aspirants will have to stand on their own strength and cannot hope for a helping hand from the Ideal they pursue.

Some may point out that the path of the Impersonal Absolute is the superior, because it is difficult and because only a few are qualified for it. But merely because something is difficult, it cannot be called superior. Superiority consists in a thing being easy and at the same time most effective. So the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* compares *Bhakti* to a morsel of food eaten. By itself it appeases hunger, gives good taste, and strengthens the body at the same time. All these constitute one process. The function of *Bhakti* is similar. It confers renunciation, bliss and knowledge, all at one stroke.

How the path of devotion fulfils these is made clear in the next verse.

5. *Vrs.6-7*: These two verses set forth the special advantage of the path of devotion. It consists in the fact that the God of love is an active factor in the devotee's life. What is said here is that He lifts up the sincere and whole-hearted devotee from the ocean of *Saṁsāra*. In Chaps. 10 and 11 the Lord says He illumines his intellect, and remaining within the devotee's innermost being, shatters the darkness of ignorance by the shining lamp of wisdom. Is He then cold to the one on the path of the Impersonal Absolute? No, He is not cold but the aspirant is cold. The aspirant's understanding of the Divine is that He is Impersonal and therefore without responsiveness. An Impersonal Being cannot be prayed to nor does He respond. By one's discriminative effort one can rise up to His level and be He. In the path of pure Yoga also it is the same. By the power of concentration one reaches His being. As a person's faith is, so the Lord is to him. The aspirant on the path of Love understands Him as a loving Person—a Being whom one can adore and pray to, and who responds to the devotees' earnest call by bestowing His grace on him and uplifting Him from *Saṁsāra*.

These verses are a conclusive proof of the fact that the *Gītā* accepts both the paths of *Bhakti* (the adoration of God as the Personal) and the path of *Jñāna* (the pursuit of the Impersonal) as self-sufficient disciplines to attain the spiritual *summum bonum*. In the path of *Bhakti*, the aspirant may work at all stages, as mentioned in the previous chapter (XI. 55), '*Matkarmakṛt*, (engaged in My work), and as said later in XVIII. 54, '*Sarva-karmāṇyapi sadā kurvāṇo-mad-vyapāśrayaḥ*' (one doing all kinds of works always, fully resigned to Me). In the path of devotion there is no contradiction between work and spiritual pursuit, if the work is of the nature of service of the Lord, either at the preparatory stage or at the stage of perfection. And it is the *Gītā* doctrine that by itself, the path of devotion can give the highest illumination.

Sri Ramakrishna makes plain the meaning of the *Gītā* in a homely parable. A master has a garden supervisor who is very faithful and hardworking and serves the master to his perfect satisfaction. Highly pleased with him, the Master puts the servant

on his own seat, telling him, 'You are as good as myself.' This is the meaning of the Verse 7.18, '*Jñānī tu ātmaiva me matam*' (The man of knowledge is My very self), although from the pure Advaita point of view it is interpreted as meaning that the Jñāni and Myself are one.

It has to be noted that Jñāna or knowledge need not necessarily mean the knowledge of the oneness of the Jīva with the Supreme Being. All understanding of one's relationship with the Supreme can be called Jñāna. So in the Bhakti context, the above passage can very well mean the understanding of the extreme closeness and intimacy between the devotee and the Lord, as implied in Sri Ramakrishna's parable. Even if it is taken otherwise, it can be said that, according to the Gītā, knowledge of unity is a gift of God on a devotee. To attempt to gain that by a direct recourse to the philosophy of the Impersonal is fraught with very great difficulties for man, who is entrenched in the feeling that his self is the body. And a man who is not dominated by that sense is only a hypothetical entity, to be found nowhere in actual life. (Also see No. 5 on Gītā VII. 18 elsewhere.)

It is perhaps relevant to quote here what Sri Kṛṣṇa himself says to his disciple Uddhava on the self-sufficiency of Bhakti discipline in *Bhāgavata* XI. 20.29-35. It is said there: "When a man thus continues to follow the disciplines of Bhakti without break, I begin to dwell in his heart, and thereupon, all the desires of the heart are destroyed owing to My presence. When an aspirant realises Me, the soul of all, his ego-sense, which constitutes the knot of the heart, is cut asunder; all his doubts about God, the Atman etc., are dispelled; and the hold of past Karma on him gets attenuated. For one who is thus endowed with devotion that constantly makes the mind centred in Me, there is no need of knowledge and renunciation, as disciplines separate from the practice of devotion, for the attainment of the highest spiritual *summum bonum*. Whatever can be attained by Vedic rituals, austerities, knowledge, dispassion, Yoga, charities and other spiritual disciplines—be that the abode of the celestials, liberation, or Vairakuntha—all these can be attained by a votary of the path of devotion without any difficulty, if he so desires. But holy men of firm mind, who are endowed with unwavering devotion to Me, do not desire or accept even Mokṣa, which gives the freedom from birth and

death, even if I Myself offer it to them. The state of mind in which a man is free from wants of every kind is declared to be the Supreme Blessedness (Nihśreyas), infinite in its scope. Pure devotion for Me dawns only on such a person who wants nothing from Me—worldly fulfilments or even salvation."

6. *Vrs.8-11*: The Path of Devotion is, according to the Gītā, the easy and the royal road to the attainment of the Divine. Even in that path there are disciplines that are varying in their practicality for aspirants at different stages of development. They are mentioned one after another in these verses. First come those who have inborn hankering for God and whose mind always tends towards Him. Next, if one is incapable of it, systematic practices to draw the mind to God are advocated. These can include the early disciplines of Bhakti like *śravaṇa* (hearing), *kīrtana* (hymning) and *smaraṇa* (remembering). In *smaraṇa* can be included such practices as Japa (repetition of a holy name) and attempt at meditation. Through these the mind can be constantly fixed on the Divine. For people who cannot do these even because of temperamental reasons, and because of the extreme difficulty felt by many to concentrate in meditation, is given the discipline of God's work. It has got the virtue of complete objectivity, and objective concentration is much easier than subjective concentration.

But what is God's work? In a very wide sense, the whole universe is the Lord's and all the works that one devotes oneself to as a member of the social order are works of God. To discharge all one's duties with the feeling that one is His servant, that one's capacity for work is His gift, and that the fruits of the work are also His, may be called doing God's work. So the Gītā in 18.46 says that "by adoring Him, from whom all this creation has originated, with the discharge of the duties that devolve on one, an aspirant attains Siddhi (perfection)."

This is also the significance of the discipline of Pādaseva included in the nine-limbed Sādhana of Bhakti. Pādaseva is not shampooing the feet of some one. Pāda means a part of God. The scriptures say that a small part of Him is the seen universe, while the rest is transcendent. Now the service of God as manifested in the society of men and other living beings with the feeling that

God indwells them all, is the real Pādaseva, and one devoted to it in this spirit, is doing God's work.

Apart from this very wide sense, God's work can have a restricted meaning also. Work for a holy cause or for the cause of a Divine incarnation is God's work in a special sense. Such a cause was given to mankind by Swami Vivekananda when he founded the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission as a vehicle for the spread of the teachings of the Great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, and the service of Him through works consecrated to Him.

External worship of God through images installed in temples is also doing 'God's work'. Worship can be done at the individual level, forming the external counterpart of adoration of Him through meditation and Japa. So 'Archanam', worship through images, forms a part of the nine disciplines of Bhakti. It can take the shape of maintenance of great temples and the organising of religious festivals. But it has to be remembered that such organised ritualism must be accompanied by service of society, of the poor and the holy ones. It is said in the *Bhāgavata* that ritualism without the service of fellow beings as a part of it is like offerings made in ashes in place of fire. It is infructuous and ceases to be 'a work of God'. But organised ritualism together with service of living beings as a part of it, provides an excellent means of doing 'God's work'.

If a devotee feels too weak to do it even, he is asked to abandon the fruits of all works he does, and he is told that renunciation of this kind is highly effective.

But a question will arise in the mind of an enquirer, whether this is easier and more feasible than 'doing God's work'. For a man of exceedingly strong faith, it may be so, but for devotees in general it is not less difficult than the earlier discipline. For, what man is asked to do is to surrender his sense of agency and the results of action, realising that the Lord is the sole agent and oneself is only a small instrument.

This advice of the Gītā is reminiscent of Sri Ramakrishna's advice to his Bohemian disciple, Girish Chandra Ghosh. When Girish asked Sri Ramakrishna for instruction in spiritual practice,

the Great Master instructed him in the usual way to repeat the name of God at particular times, meditate on Him, etc. Girish replied that he could not undertake to do anything regularly, because there was no certainty or punctuality about anything in life as far as he was concerned. He did not even know at what time he would take his meal the next day. His life being so irregular, he wanted to be told something that was possible for him to do in the midst of his pre-occupations. Then the Master asked him to give him his (Girish's) 'power of attorney', meaning that he should completely give up his sense of agency in all actions, and put his trust in the Master at all times. Girish, who was a man of great faith, thought that this was quite easy, and agreed to do so. But as he tried to practise it and as he began to think over its implications, he found that it required him to constantly remember the Master and be resigned to him.

Such is also the implication of resigning the fruits of all works to God. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* XI. 2.36 explains this central discipline of the Bhāgavata Dharma thus: "Whatever work I do by body, word, mind, senses, Buddhi, and ego-sense, prompted by my nature, all that I offer to Nārāyaṇa."

7. *Vr.12*: In the previous verses it was suggested to those whose minds do not get absorbed in God naturally, to practise concentration, to do God's work, and to surrender all the fruits of actions to Him. These are given as relevant to less competent persons in the succeeding order. But here in this verse the last discipline prescribed to the least competent, namely, the surrender of the fruits of all actions, is given the highest place as leading to immediate attainment of spiritual realisation. That looks very puzzling. But the puzzle will be solved to a considerable extent if we remember the instruction of Sri Ramakrishna to Girish mentioned in the previous note. Its superiority consists in that any man placed in any situation can begin to practise it, provided he has a strong faith in God and the spiritual Gospel. But as one practises and reflects on it, one will find that the other disciplines are all involved in it, and that constant remembrance of God and practice of meditation automatically follow the successful performance of surrendering the sense of agency and the fruits of work to God.

There is also a suggestion in it that the practice of concen-

tration, knowledge of scriptures, and doing God's work are to be considered successful to the extent that they enable one to surrender the agency and the fruits of works to God. It is the touchstone of the sincere and successful practice of the other disciplines.

The verse also means that at least as far as Bhakti is concerned there is no opposition between its disciplines and works at any stage.

8. *Vrs.13-20*: Just like the description of the *Sthitaprajña*, the man of steady wisdom, in Chapter 2, this is stated to be a description of a Bhakta, a devotee. A question may arise here. Two types of aspirants are described in this chapter—the Bhaktas who devote themselves heart and soul to the God of love (the Supreme Being as Person) and those who devote themselves to Him as Avyakta and Akṣara, the Impersonal Absolute referred to in the verses 3 and 4 of this chapter. The ideal of which of these two paths is portrayed by this description of the Bhakta given here? There is a view that this refers to the ideal of a follower of the Impersonal Absolute, who is usually referred to as Jñāni. But right through the description, the ideal man is referred to as *Bhakta* and *Bhaktimān*. It will not therefore be appropriate to consider this as an exclusive description of the Jñāni. In fact in this chapter as also in earlier ones, it is expressly stated that the goal of the paths of Bhakti and of Jñāna is the same in the final state. The difference is only at the stage of disciplines. As has been stated in many places, each discipline is self-sufficient in itself and one need not be subordinated to the others. Detachment, universal love, resignation, self-control, absence of egoism etc., are the common characteristics of perfect men, whatever might be the discipline they adopt. They are also virtues to be cultivated by aspirants of all types. So it is better to take this passage as referring to both the types of aspirants mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter XIII

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगः

DIFFERENTIATION OF THE KNOWER FROM THE KNOWN

SUMMARY

The field and its knower: (1-6) The Bhagavan said: There are two categories in the consciousness of man—the object and the subject, the 'seen' and the 'seer'. The 'seen' is in the field, the body; the 'seer' is the Spirit, the Jīva. The body-mind is the 'field', because it is the environment in association with which the 'seer' the Jīva, enjoys the fruits of his actions and also undergoes spiritual evolution. Thus the body-mind is its adjunct, the instrument through which the Spirit contacts objects. Still, it is only the 'seen', the 'object', because the 'seer', the Jīva, is not part of it but distinct from it and master of it.

In a broader sense the field is not merely the individual body, but Universal Nature, of which the individual body is a part. This Universal Nature, the Field, is constituted of the following: The great elements, Egoity, Intellect, the Unmanifested State, the eleven organs, the five objects of perception, will, aversion, joy, sorrow, combination, life and vitality. All the individual fields are made of the combination of these, and in all of them the Seer is Myself (My part or reflection in them).

Knowledge and its means: (7-11) The Seen and the Seer, the body and the Spirit, are inextricably mixed up in man in the state of ignorance. To know them in their distinctiveness is Knowledge, and this knowledge grows by the cultivation of the following disciplines: Absence of pride and vanity, non-injury,

patience, perseverance, service of the teacher, self-control, revulsion to tempting objects of senses, reflection on the ephemerality of life, non-attachment, non-entanglement with family, imperturbability, intense devotion to Me, frequenting solitude, steady pursuit of spiritual enquiry, and strong aspiration for the Truth. These constitute knowledge or spirituality, and the opposite is ignorance or unspirituality.

The object to be known: (12-15) The object to be known is the Supreme Being, who cannot be described by words like 'existent' and 'non-existent'. He enfolds everything in Himself and also indwells everything. Though devoid of senses He enlivens all sense powers; though unattached and unrelated, He supports everything; and though beyond the Gunas of Prakṛti, He is the enjoyer of all the Guṇas. He is both far and near, and because of his subtlety, He appears to be not. He is the originator and the consumer of everything. He is the Lord of all and remains undivided in the apparently diversified phenomena. He is the ultimate consciousness that reveals everything. The source of all light and life and the centre to which all spiritual quest is directed, He verily resides in the heart of all.

Knowledge as discovery of one's spiritual identity: (16-34) Thus there are two aspects in man—the body-mind which is a part and parcel of Universal Nature, and the Spirit which is ultimately one with Me, the supreme Subject. Not aware of his real nature, the Spirit identifies himself with the properties of material nature, and becomes subject to repeated embodiments in Samsāra. Identification makes him the enjoyer of what is really of the body-mind. But there is present in the embodied being another Puruṣa, the witness of all, the sanctioner of all, the Lord and Support of all, the Master of soul and matter. It is the Paramātmān. Let the aspirant, overcoming the identification of the Spirit with material Nature, find his identity in Me, the Supreme Lord, who is always the nearest and the closest to him—who is, as it were, his matrix, who is the One spiritual Sun reflecting as all the individual Spirits in the redeemed. Real Knowledge consists in the understanding of this distinction between Nature and Spirit, and the Spirit's absolute freedom from Nature.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदुः ॥ १ ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca :

*Idam śarīram Kaunteya kṣetram ity abhidhīyate /
etad yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetra-jña iti tad-viduḥ* //1//

Kaunteya : O Son of Kuntī *idam* : this *śarīram* : body *kṣetram* : Kṣetra i.e., field (for reaping the fruits of action) *ity abhidhīyate* : is spoken of as. *Etad* : This body *yah* : who *vetti* : knows it (as one's property) *taṁ* : him *kṣetrajñaḥ* : as Kṣetrajña (knower of the field) *iti* : as *tadviduḥ* : men versed in this subject *prāhuḥ* : say.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. This body, O son of Kuntī, is called the Kṣetra, the field (because the fruits of action are reaped in it). He who knows it (as his property) is the Kṣetrajña or the Spirit who knows the field. So say those versed in this subject.¹

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ २ ॥

*Kṣetra-jñam e'āpi mām viddhi sarva-kṣetreṣu Bhārata /
kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor jñānam yat tat jñānam matam mama* //2//

Bhārata : O scion of the Bharata race! *sarvakṣetreṣu* : in all the kṣetras *ca* : and *mām* : Me *api* : alone *kṣetrajñam* : as Kṣetrajña *viddhi* : know. *Kṣetra-kṣetrajñayoḥ* : regarding Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña *yat* : which *jñānam* : knowledge *tat* : that *jñānam* : knowledge (*iti* : this) *mama* : My *matam* : view.

2. Know Me, O scion of the Bharata race, to be the Kṣetra-jña (the Spirit) in all Kṣetras (bodies). The knowledge of the distinction between Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña alone is real knowledge according to Me.

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।

स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥ 3 ॥

Tat kṣetram yac ca yādrk ca yad-vikāri yataś ca yat /
sa ca yo yat prabhāvaś ca tat samāseṇa me śṛṇu //3//

Tat : That *kṣetra* : Kṣetram *yat* : which *ca* : and, *yādrk* : of what nature *ca* : and, *yadvikāri* : what its modifications, *yataś* : from what *yat* : which *ca* : and, *saś* : he (the Kṣetrajña) *yāś* : who *ca* : and, *yat prabhāvaś* : what his powers are *ca* : and, *tat* : that *samāseṇa* : in brief *me* : from Me *śṛṇu* : hear.

3. Hear from Me in brief what the Kṣetra is, of what nature it is, what its modifications are, and from what causes what effects have sprung. Also know who the Kṣetrajña is and what his powers consist in.

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।

ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ 4 ॥

Rṣibhir bahudhā gītām chandobhir vividhaiḥ prthak /
brahma-sūtra-padais c'aiva hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ //4//

Rṣibhiḥ : By *Rṣis bahudhā* : in many ways *vividhaiḥ* : in varying *chandobhiḥ* : in metres *prthak gītām* : sung in various hymns, *hetumatbhiḥ* : well-reasoned *viniścitaiḥ* : conclusive *brahma-sūtra padaiḥ* : in the aphorisms of the Brahma-sūtras *ca* : and *eva* : also.

4. In many and different ways have the Rishis sung about this subject in metres of varying description. The well-reasoned and definitive aphorisms of the Brahma-sūtras too have discussed it.

महामृतान्महंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।

इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ 5 ॥

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।

एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ 6 ॥

Mahā-bhūtāny ahaṁkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca |
indriyāṇi daś'aikaṁ ca pañca c'endriya-gocarāḥ ||5||

Ichā dveṣaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ saṁghātaś cetanā dhṛtiḥ.
etat kṣetram samāsenā savikāram udāhṛtam ||6||

Mahābhūtāni : The five great elements beginning with the sky
ahaṁkāraḥ : the I-sense *buddhiḥ* : intellect *avyaktam* : the Unmani-
 fested Root Matter *ca* : and *daśa indriyāṇi* : the ten organs *ekaṁ*
ca : and one more (i.e., the mind as the eleventh organ) *pañca* :
 five *indriya-gocarāḥ* : objects of senses *icchā* : desire *dveṣaḥ* :
 hatred *sukhaṁ* : pleasure *duḥkhaṁ* : pain *saṁghātaḥ* : the aggregate
 i.e., the body *cetanā* : consciousness *dhṛtiḥ* : will *savikāram* : along
 with its modifications *etat kṣetram* : this Kṣetra *samāsenā* : briefly
udāhṛtam : has been described.

5-6. The five great elements, the I-sense, the intellect, and the Unmanifested (Root Matter); the ten organs along with the mind as the eleventh, and the five objects of the senses; desire, hatred, pleasure and pain; the body, consciousness, and will—such is a brief description of the Kṣetra with all its modifications.²

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिराजवम् ।
 आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्वयंमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ 7 ॥

Amānitvam adambhitvam ahimsā kṣāntir ājavam |
ācāry'opāsanam śaucam sthairyam ātmā-vinigrahaḥ ||7||

Amānitvam : Absence of self-importance *adambhitvam* : unpretentiousness *ahimsā* : non-violence *kṣāntiḥ* : patience *ājavam* : straight-forwardness; *ācāryopāsanam* : service of the teacher *śaucam* : cleanliness *sthairyam* : steadfastness *ātmavinigrahaḥ* : self-control.

7. Freedom from self-importance, unpretentiousness, non-violence, patience, straight-forwardness, service of the teacher, cleanliness, steadfastness, and self-control;³

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ 8 ॥

*Indriy'ārtheṣu vairāgyam anahamkāra eva ca |
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-doṣ'ānudaśsanam*

||8||

Indriyārtheṣu : Towards sense objects *vairāgyam* : abhorrence *anahamkāraḥ* : self-effacement *eva* : also *ca* : and *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-doṣ'ānudaśsanam* : perception of evil and misery in birth, death, old age and sickness.

8. Abhorrence of sensuality, self-effacement and perception of evil and misery in birth, death, old age and sickness;

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ 9 ॥

*Asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putra-dāra-grhādiṣu |
nityam ca sama-cittatvam iṣṭ'āniṣṭ'opapattiṣu*

||9||

Putra-dāra-grhādiṣu : In respect of son, wife, house etc., *asaktiḥ* : detachment *anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ* : non-identification with, *iṣṭ'āniṣṭo-papattiṣu* in the attainment of the favourable and the unfavourable *nityam* : always *samacittatvam* : evenness of mind.

9. Detachment from property and family members, non-identification with them and their fortunes, and constant evenness of mind in favourable and unfavourable situations;

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।

विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ 10 ॥

*Mayi c'ānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī |
vivikta-deśa-sevitvam aratir jana-samsadi*

||10||

Mayi : To Me *ananya-yogena* : through communion with a sense of intimacy (non-separateness) *avyabhicāriṇī* : unswerving *bhaktiḥ* :

devotion, *viviktadeśa sevītvam* : resort to solitude, *janasamsadi* : for vulgar company *aratih* : abhorrence.

10. Practice of unswerving devotion through contemplation on Me as one's 'own' (or on Me in non-separation), resort to solitude, and abhorrence of vulgar company;

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।

एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ 11 ॥

Adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvaṁ tattva jñānārtha-darśanam /
etat jñānam iti proktam ajñānam yad ato'nyathā //11//

Adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvaṁ : Constant application to spiritual studies and practices, *tattva-jñānārtha-darśanam* : a comprehension of the goal of spiritual enlightenment (and the destiny of man), *etat* : this *jñānam* : knowledge *iti* : as *proktam* : is spoken of, *yat* : what *atah* : to it *anyathā* : opposed *ajñānam* : ignorance.

11. Constant application to the study of spiritual texts and practice of spiritual disciplines, and a clear comprehension of the goal of spiritual enlightenment and the destiny of man—all these described before constitute knowledge; what is opposed to it is all ignorance.

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ 12 ॥

Jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi yat jñātvā'mṛtam aśnute /
anādimat param brahma na sat tan n'āsad ucyate //12//

Yat : Which *jñeyam* : ought to be known, *yat* : which *jñātvā* : knowing *amṛtam* : immortality *aśnute* : is attained, *tat* : that *pravakṣyāmi* : I shall declare; *anādimat* : without beginning *param* : supreme *Brahma* : Brahman *na* : neither *sat* : being *na* : nor *asat* : non-being *ucyate* : is described as.

12. I shall now declare the Object which ought to be known, by knowing which one attains to immortality. It is the Supreme

Brahman, the eternal Being who cannot be described either as existent or non-existent (in the way sense-bound material objects are described)⁴

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ 13 ॥

Sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat sarvato'kṣi-śiro-mukham /

sarvataḥ śrutimal loke sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati

||13||

Sarvataḥ : Everywhere *pāṇipādam* : hands and feet, *sarvataḥ* : everywhere *akṣiśiromukham* : eyes, head and face, *sarvataḥ* : everywhere *śrutimat* : with ears, *tat* : that *loke* : in the world *sarvam* : everything *āvṛtya* : enveloping and transcending *tiṣṭhati* :

13. His hands and feet are everywhere. His eyes, ears and mouth grasp everything. His face is in all directions. He is the transcendent Spirit, enveloping all that exists in the world.

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।

असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ 14 ॥

Sarv'endriya-guṇābhāsaṁ sarv'endriya-vivarjitam /

asaktam sarva-bhṛc c'aiva nirguṇam guṇa-bhoktr ca

||14||

Sarvendriya-guṇābhāsaṁ : Revealing all senses i.e., enabling all the senses to function, *sarvendriya-vivarjitam* : devoid of all senses, *asaktam* : unattached *sarvabhṛt* : support of all *ca eva* : and yet, *nirguṇam* : beyond the Guṇas of Prakṛti *guṇabhoktā* : the enjoyer of the Guṇas *ca* : and yet.

14. By His power the faculties of the senses function, but sense organs He has none. He is the support of all things, but they do not affect Him. He transcends Nature and its functions, but these constitute the objects for His enjoyment.

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ 15 ॥

*Bahir antaś ca bhūtānām acaram caram eva ca /
sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyam dūrastham c'āntike ca tat* //15//

Tat : That *bhūtānām* : of beings *bahiḥ* : without *antaḥ* : within *ca* : and, *acaram* : not moving *caram* : moving *eva* : also *ca* : and; *sūkṣmatvāt* : because of subtlety *tat* : that *avijñeyam* : cannot be an object of knowledge, *dūrastham* : it is far off *antike* : near by *ca* : also.

15. He is within and without all beings. Though unmoving, He looks like one moving (because He is everywhere). He is both far and near—far to the ignorant and near to the knowing ones. Owing to subtlety, He cannot be known like gross objects.

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।

भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ 16 ॥

*Avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam /
bhūta-bhartṛ ca tat jñeyam grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca* //16//

Jñeyam : What is to be known *tat* : that *avibhaktam* : impartible whole *ca* : yet *bhūteṣu* : among all beings *vibhaktam* : divided *iva ca* : as if *sthitam* : remains, *bhūtabhartṛ* : the support of all beings *ca* : and, also, *grasiṣṇu* : devourer *prabhaviṣṇu* : originator *ca* : and also.

16. He, (the Brahman) whom aspirants seek to know, is the impartible Whole, yet does He seem to dwell in all beings as if divided into many. He is the generator and supporter of all beings, and their devourer too.

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥ 17 ॥

*Jyotiṣām api taj jyotis tamasaḥ param ucyate /
jñānaṁ jñeyam jñāna-gamyam hr̥di sarvasya dhiṣṭhitam* //17//

Tat : That *jyotiṣām* : of things having light *api* : even *jyotiḥ* : the revealing light *tamasah* : of darkness *param* : beyond *ucyate* : is said to be; *jñānam* : knowledge *jñeyam* : the object of knowledge *jñānagamyam* : the one to whom knowledge is the way of approach *sarvasya* : of all things *hṛdi* : in the heart *dhiṣṭhitam* : is established.

17. The self-luminous light of consciousness revealing even all that is luminous, He is beyond obscuration by the darkness of ignorance. He, the light of knowledge, He, the quest of knowledge, He, the way to whom is knowledge—in the innermost recess of all beings is He established.

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।

मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ 18 ॥

Iti kṣetram tathā jñānam jñeyam c'oktam samāsataḥ /
mad-bhakta etad vijñāya mad-bhāvāy'opapadyate //18//

Iti : Thus *kṣetram* : field (material nature, body) *tathā* : as also *jñānam* : knowledge *jñeyam* : the object of knowledge *ca* : and *samāsataḥ* : in brief *uktam* : has been expounded; *madbhaktaḥ* : My devotee *etat* : this *vijñāya* : having known *madbhāvāya* : for My state *upapadyate* : becomes fit.

18. Thus has been briefly expounded what the Kṣetra (material Nature) is, as also what constitutes knowledge and the object of knowledge. My devotee who understands these verities becomes worthy of My state.

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्वन्नादी उभावपि ।

विकारांश्च गुणान्श्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥ 19 ॥

Prakṛtiṁ puruṣam c'aiva viddhy anādī ubhāvapi /
vikārāṁś ca guṇāṁś c'aiva viddhi prakṛti-sambhavān //19//

Prakṛtiṁ : Prakṛti (material Nature) *puruṣam* : Puruṣa (Spirit) *ca* : and *eva* : indeed *ubhau* : both *api* : also *anādī* : without beginning *viddhi* : know; *vikārān ca* : changeful objects *guṇān* :

qualities *ca* : and *eva* : also *prakṛtisambhavān* : as sprung from Prakṛti *viddhi* : know.

19. Know both Prakṛti (Nature) and Puruṣa (Spirit) to be beginningless, eternal verities. Know also that all changeful objects and attributes (that constitute the world of daily experience) are sprung from Prakṛti.⁵

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।

पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥ 20 ॥

Kārya-karṇa-kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate /
puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānām bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate //20//

Kārya-karṇa-kartṛtve : In the formation (and functioning) of the body and its sense organs *prakṛtiḥ* : Prakṛti *hetuḥ* : cause *ucyate* : is said to be; *sukhaduḥkhānām* : of pleasure and pain *bhoktṛtve* : in the enjoyment of *puruṣaḥ* : Puruṣa *hetuḥ* : cause *ucyate* : is spoken of.

20. Prakṛti is the cause of the formation and functioning of the body and the senses, while it is the Puruṣa that experiences pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow.

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान् ।

कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥ 21 ॥

Puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi bhukṣte prakṛti-jān guṇān /
kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu //21//

Puruṣaḥ : Puruṣa *Prakṛtisthaḥ* : remaining in Prakṛti *Prakṛtijān* : born of Prakṛti *guṇān* : objects and their qualities *bhukṣte* : experiences *hi* : indeed; *asya* : of the individual spirit *guṇasaṅgaḥ* : attachment, to these objects *sadasad-yoni-janmasu* : for the birth in good and evil wombs *kāraṇam* : cause.

21. Seated in bodies, which are the products of Prakṛti, the Puruṣa enjoys the objects and qualities born of Prakṛti. Attachment to these objects is the cause of the Spirit getting embodiments in evil or exalted wombs.

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।

परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽसिन्पुरुषः परः ॥ 22 ॥

Upadraṣṭā'numantā ca bhartā bhoktā mah'eśvaraḥ /
param'ātm'eti c'āpyukto dehe'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ //22//

Asmin dehe : In this body *upadraṣṭā* : witness *anumantā* : sanctioner *ca* : and *bhartā* : supporter *bhoktā* : enjoyer *maheśvaraḥ* : sovereign Lord *paramātmā* : the Supreme Self *iti* : thus *ca* : and *uktaḥ* : spoken of *paraḥ* : supreme, transcendent (or another) *puruṣaḥ* : Spirit *api (asti)* : also exists.

22. In this body there is also the Transcendent and the Supreme Spirit, who is described as the Supreme Self and Sovereign Lord, the unconcerned Witness, the Sanctioner, the Supporter and the Enjoyer.

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥ 23 ॥

Ya evaṁ vetti puruṣam prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha /
sarvathā vartamano'pi na sa bhūyo'bhijāyate //23//

Evam : In this way *puruṣam* : Puruṣa (Spirit) *guṇaiḥ saha* : along with Guṇas *prakṛtiṁ* : Nature *ca* : and *yaḥ* : who *vetti* : knows, *sah* : he *sarvathā* : in whatever way *vartamānaḥ api* : might be living *bhūyaḥ* : again *na abhijāyate* : is not born.

23. Whoever thus knows the Puruṣa (Spirit) and Prakṛti (Nature) along with its effects, will never be born again, whatever be his mode of living.

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।

अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥ 24 ॥

Dhyānen'ātmāni paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā /
anye sāṅkhyena yogena karma-yogena c'āpare //24//

Kecit : Some *ātmānam* : the Ātman *dhyānena* : by means of meditation *ātmani* : within oneself *ātmanā* : by the purified mind *paśyanti* : perceive; *anye* : others *sāṃkhyena yogena* : by the path of knowledge; *apare* : others *ca* : again *karma yogena* : by the path of action.

24. There are some who perceive the Ātman within themselves by the practice of meditation with a purified mind. There are also others who approach Him through the discipline of knowledge or of work.⁶

अन्ये त्वेषमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येष्य उपासते ।

तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ 25 ॥

Anye tvevam ajānantaḥ śrutvā'nyebhya upāśate /
te'pi c'ātitaranty eva mṛtyum śruti-parāyaṇāḥ //25//

Evam : In the manner described *ajānantaḥ* : not knowing *anye* : some others *tu* : as for, *anyebhyaḥ* : from others (teachers or elders) *śrutvā* : hearing *upāśate* : worship; *śruti-parāyaṇāḥ te* : those who are full of faith in what they have heard from the teacher *api ca* : also *mṛtyum* : death *ātitaranti* : overcome *eva* : certainly.

25. There are still others, who, being unfit to follow the disciplines described before—for they lack the knowledge of the Yoga Sāstra and the Vedas—, adopt forms of worship (devotional disciplines) under instruction from teachers or elders. Full of faith in these instructions heard, and following them sincerely as their only refuge, they too certainly overcome the cycle of births and deaths.

यावत्संजायते किञ्चित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ 26 ॥

Yāvat saṃjāyate kiñcit sattvaṃ sthāvara-jaṅgamam /
kṣetra-kṣetrajña-samyogāt tad viddhi Bharata'rṣabha //26//

Bharatarṣabha : O the best of the Bharata clan! *sthāvara-jaṅgamam* : the moving and the unmoving *yāvat kiñcit* : whatever *sattvaṃ* :

object *saṁjāyate* : is born *tat* : that *kṣetra-kṣetrajña-saṁyogāt* : due to the union of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña *viddhi* : know to be.

26. O thou the best of the Bharata clan! Whatever there is born—whether moving or unmoving—it has come into being due to the union of Kṣetra (body) and Kṣetrajña (Spirit).⁷

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।

विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ 27 ॥

Samam sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantaṁ param'eśvaram /
vinaśyatsv avinaśyantaṁ yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati //27//

Sarveṣu bhūteṣu : In all beings *samam* : alike *tiṣṭhantaṁ* : abiding *paramesvaram* : the Supreme Lord *vinaśyatsu* : when everything perishes *avinaśyantaṁ* : as imperishable substance *yaḥ* : who *paśyati* : sees, *saḥ* : he *paśyati* : sees.

27. He really sees who perceives the Supreme Lord alike in everything—as the Imperishable Substance abiding amidst perishing phenomena.⁸

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ 28 ॥

Samam paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam īśvaram /
na hinasty ātmanā'tmānaṁ tato yāti parāṁ gatim //28//

Hi : For *sarvatra* : everywhere *samam* : alike *samavasthitam* : abiding *īśvaram* : the Lord *paśyan* : seeing, *ātmanā* : by the self (the ego) *ātmānaṁ* : the Self (the true spiritual self) *na hinasti* : does not destroy; *tataḥ* : therefore *parāṁ gatim* : the supreme goal *yāti* : attains.

28. For, he who perceives the Lord's presence alike everywhere no longer works against his own spiritual well-being (by mistaking the ego for the true spiritual Self as men in ignorance do). He therefore attains to the Supreme Goal.

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।

यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ 29 ॥

Prakṛty'eva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ /
yaḥ paśyati tathā'tmānam akartāraṁ sa paśyati //29//

Sarvaśaḥ : In all ways *karmāṇi* : actions *prakṛtyā eva* : by Prakṛti (Nature) alone *kriyamāṇāni* : as being done, *tathā* : in the same way *ātmānam* : the Ātman *akartāraṁ* : actionless *ca* : and *yaḥ* : who *paśyati* : sees, *śaḥ* : he *paśyati* : sees.

29. He is the real seer who perceives that Prakṛti (i.e., one's body-mind born of Prakṛti) alone is doing all works and that the Ātman, the true spiritual self, is the actionless witness.⁹

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।

तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥ 30 ॥

Yadā bhūta-prthag-bhāvam eka-stham anupaśyati /
tata eva ca vistāraṁ brahma saṁpadyate tadā //30//

Bhūta-prthag-bhāvam : The manifoldness of beings *ekastham* : as centred in the One *tataḥ* : from that alone *vistāraṁ ca* : their evolution as well *yadā* : when *anupaśyati* : perceives, *tadā* : then *brahma* : Brahman *saṁpadyate* : he attains.

30. When one perceives the manifold objects as centred in the One and as evolved from It as well—then he attains Brahman.¹⁰

अनादित्वाद्भिर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।

शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ 31 ॥

Anāditvān nirguṇatvāt paramātmā'yam avyayaḥ /
śarīra-stho'pi Kaunteya na karoti na lipyate //31//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī *anāditvāt* : being beginningless *nirguṇatvāt* : not being a product of the Guṇas of Prakṛti or Nature

avyayaḥ : immutable *-ayam* : this *paramātmā* : the highest Self *śarīrasthaḥ api* : though dwelling in the body *na karoti* : is actionless, *na lipyate* : is untainted.

31. That highest Self, being the immutable and unoriginated Spirit beyond Nature, is free from all action and stain, though dwelling in the body.

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।

सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥ 32 ॥

Yathā sarva-gataṁ saukṣmyād ākāśaṁ n'opalipyate /
sarvatr'āvasthito dehe tathā' tmā n'opalipyate //32//

Sarvagatam : All-pervading *ākāśam* : Ākāśa (space, sky, ether) *saukṣmyāt* : because of subtlety *yathā* : as *na upalipyate* : is not stained, *tathā* : in the same way *sarvatra dehe* : in all bodies *avasthitaḥ* : though existing *ātmā* : Ātman *na upalipyate* : is not stained by anything.

32. Just as the all-pervading Ākāśa, because of its subtlety, is not stained by anything, so this Ātman, though abiding in all bodies, is never affected by any impurity.

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥ 33 ॥

Yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ kṛtsnaṁ lokam imam raviḥ /
kṣetram kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ prakāśayati Bhārata //33//

Bhārata : O scion of the Bharata clan! *ekaḥ raviḥ* : the one sun *kṛtsnam imam* : this entire *lokam* : world *yathā* : as *prakāśayati* : illumines *tathā* : in that way *kṣetrī* : the Indwelling Spirit *kṛtsnam kṣetram* : all bodies *prakāśayati* : illumines.

33. Just as the single sun illumines the whole universe, so the (one) Indwelling Spirit enlivens all bodies (with self-consciousness).¹¹

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरैवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।

भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥ 34 ॥

Kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor evam antaram jñāna-cakṣuṣā |
bhūta-prakṛti-mokṣam ca ye vidur yānti te param ||34||

Evam : In this way *kṣetra-kṣetrajñayoḥ* : between *Kṣetra* and *Kṣetrajña antaram* : distinction, *bhūta-prakṛti-mokṣam ca* : and freedom of the Spirit from the bondage of *Prakṛti jñānacakṣuṣā* : by spiritual insight *ye* : who *viduḥ* : know, *te* : they *param* : the Supreme *yānti* : reach.

34. Whoever perceives by spiritual insight the distinction between *Kṣetra* (Nature) and *Kṣetrajña* (Spirit) as also the freedom of the Spirit from the hold of Nature, they reach the Supreme.

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
 योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविसागयोगो
 नाम त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥ 13 ॥

NOTES

1. *Vrs.1-2*: In contrast to the devotional doctrine taught in the last chapter, here the knowledge discipline or *Jñāna Yoga* is described. The ideal of the Impersonal Absolute (the *Akṣara*) was described in the previous chapter in order to draw a contrast between the two paths. But the steps of the discipline of *Jñāna* are not stated there. Here it is given as consisting in the discrimination between the body (*Kṣetra*) and the Spirit (*Kṣetrajña*), to whom the body in reality is only an adjunct but which (body) is taken as one with the Spirit through identification arising from ignorance (*Ajñāna*). *Jñāna* or knowledge consists in the dissipation of this ignorance through discrimination and the recognition of the unity of the substratum of the *Jīva* with Brahman. In pure *Advaita* the

unity is one of absolute identity, while the Advaitins upholding identity-in-difference call it a unity between a part and the whole, and the dualists, an absolutely dependent existence on its principal and creator.

The spirit (Ātman) is called here as Kṣetrajña, the knower of the field, and the body-mind combination, Kṣetra or the Field. As the fruits of Karma are realised through the body-mind combination it is appropriate to call it a field. Strictly speaking, the body-mind combination is the instrument through which enjoyments and sufferings are had by the Jīva. It is spoken of here as something known, and the Kṣetrajña as the knower. In fact the external objects contacted through the body-mind are the 'objects known'. But the instrument, the body-mind, through which their knowledge is gained, is also an object known. It forms both the instrument and the object known. Though only an instrument or Upadhi of the Jīva, the Jīva is in identification with it, until spiritual enlightenment reveals its objectivity.

Usually in the Vedantic texts, what is called here as the Kṣetra in order to distinguish it from the *Dṛśyas* or objects seen as separate entities, is known as the Kośa, vestment or sheath of the Ātman. They are classified as five—Annamaya-Kośa (the sheath of physical body) Prāṇamaya-Kośa (the vitalistic sheath), Manomaya-Kośa (mental sheath), Vijñānamaya-Kośa (knowledge-sheath), and Ānanda-maya-Kośa (sheath of bliss).

2. *Vrs.5-6*: What are mentioned in the fifth verse are the twentyfour categories of the Sāmkhyas. By the expression Mahā-bhūtas is meant the Tanmatras (or the subtle aspect) of the Bhūtas. For, their gross aspects are referred to in the expression the five 'objects of the senses' (*indriya-gocarāḥ*). What follows in the sixth verse (*icchā-dveṣaḥ* etc.) are what the Vaiśeṣikas consider as the attributes of the Spirit. But really they are psychic and mental, and are functions of the Kṣetra. So they are added to the twenty-four Sāmkhya categories.

While in the first two verses the analysis appears to be at the individual level, it receives a cosmic significance in the enumeration contained in verses five and six. It is sensible to take this passage as implying both the body-mind of the individual and the Cosmos as a whole constituting the body of the Divine—a vision of

which Arjuna had a little while ago. It has already been said that both the material Prakṛti and the Jīvas are his two Saktis and that He holds together all entities interpenetrating them as a thread interpenetrates the beads of a necklace. According to some schools of Vedānta like the Qualified Monistic, the Lord ensouls every atom and every Jīva individually and in their totality. The Jīvas and the Jagat constitute His body and He ensouls them. The true understanding of this can also be called enlightenment, which the Lord imparted to Arjuna when he exhorted him to be a mere instrument (*nimittamātram bhava savya-sācin*) in the 11th chapter.

3. *Vrs.7-11*: In verse 3 Kṛṣṇa had offered to describe both the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajñā. But having described the Kṣetra, he is describing what is meant by Jñāna or enlightenment, instead of describing the Kṣetrajñā. Jñāna or enlightenment was described in verse 2 as consisting in the understanding of the difference between the Kṣetrajñā and the Kṣetra. In place of elucidating this conception of Jñāna, he gives here a list of virtues to be practised, and calls these virtues Jñāna. The justification for this must be that Jñāna dawns in one only by cultivating the virtues enlisted.

4. *Vrs.12-18*: After the description of the Kṣetra in Verses 5-6, what one expects is a description of the Kṣetrajñā, as implied in verse 2. But in the teaching set forth thereafter, in verses 7-11, is given a number of qualities constituting Jñāna. Next we are getting in these verses 12-17, a description of what is called Jñeyam, or the object to be known. The description given is of the Supreme Spirit as immanent in and upholding all the manifested universe, termed here as Brahman, the beginningless and the all-pervading. This description can very well suit what Arjuna experienced in the theophany of the Cosmic Form, minus its pictorial details. So the Jñeyam here is the Supreme Being not as the Impersonal Absolute described in Chapter 12, but as the Spirit ensouling all that exists. And he who knows it is called 'My Bhakta' (*Mad-bhakta etad vijñāya* Ch. 13.18). So it looks that this chapter is also dealing with the Bhakti doctrine, revealing God as the Universal Spirit ensouling all existence and not the Avyaktā and the Akṣara spoken of in Chapter 12. He is also described as He who consumes everything and also projects everything.

The description of the Jñeyam, the object to be known, as

neither 'being' nor 'non-being' is somewhat puzzling. It can mean that it is the Absolute Subject. The subject cannot be seen as the 'this', an object of cognition, just as the eye cannot be seen by itself. Not being an object of cognition, it cannot be described as 'being'. At the same time, it is not 'non-being', since the subject is what guarantees the existence of the object. Though the eye is not perceived by the eye, it still 'is', in its own unique sense. It is what guarantees the existence of all other things. This is one meaning for this puzzling characterisation of the Jñeyam.

But the use of the word 'Jñeyam', the object to be *known*, for the Absolute Subject, which can never be an object, seems to contradict that conception itself. The description too answers more to the idea of the immanent Spirit than that of the Absolute Subject as shown earlier. It is therefore more appropriate to understand 'non-being' as meaning the causal unmanifest condition, and the effect condition or the manifest state as 'being'. All gross entities are subject to the states of cause and effect. But the Supreme Spirit is not so, as He is uncaused and changeless.

5. *Vrs.*19-23: The distinction between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña is what was taken for discussion. After describing the Kṣetra, no description of Kṣetrajña, beyond the statement that it is He Himself, was given. In place of it, what is called Jñāna and Jñeya (knowledge and object of knowledge) were described. Even the term Kṣetrajña does not occur till verse 26.

Instead, the concepts of Puruṣa and Prakṛti are now taken for discussion. The justification probably is that the ideas are the same, though these technical terms are different. Puruṣa and Prakṛti are the terms used in the Sāṃkhya philosophy for Spirit and Nature respectively. They correspond to Kṣetrajña and Kṣetra, though the Sāṃkhyan term Puruṣa conveys only the idea of the individual soul and not of the Supreme Being as is suggested when it is stated that Kṣetrajña is *Myself*.

Now the Sāṃkhya philosophy has no place for a Supreme Spirit. There are only Puruṣas or spiritual monads which are centres of pure consciousness without any activity. Prakṛti on the other hand has no consciousness, but is a stuff purely dynamic and ever changeful. A Puruṣa or a spiritual monad gets associated

with an aspect of Prakṛti through super-imposition and thus becomes the Jīva, the living spirit, entangled in the transmigratory cycle. As stated in verse 20 and 21, the Puruṣa involved in Prakṛti or the body, becomes the enjoyer of the transformations of Prakṛti, through superimposition.

But the Gītā, though it accepts the Sāṃkhyan terminology and the doctrine of the Puruṣa's involvement in Prakṛti, reduces both Prakṛti and Puruṣa into the two powers of Iśvara, the Supreme Lord (cf. 10.4-5). Here also it is stated in verse 22, that there is the *puruṣaḥ paraḥ*—, "another transcendent Puruṣa who is described as the Supreme Self, sovereign Lord, the unconcerned Witness, the Sanctioner, the Supporter, the Enjoyer." So the Puruṣa and Prakṛti of the Sāṃkhya are unified in a Supreme Lord whose powers Prakṛti and Puruṣa are.

6. *Vrs.24-25*: The Yogas referred to in the 24th verse are the paths of concentration (Rāja Yoga), the path of knowledge (Jñāna Yoga), and the path of work (Karma Yoga). What exactly is the Yoga referred to in verse 25 is not clear. It must be a reference to the path of devotion to which every one is eligible, irrespective of the knowledge of the scriptures and the philosophies. It is also based upon faith, as is implied in the expression *śrutvānye bhya upāsate*—worships hearing from others. Faith is involved in all the other Yogas also. But as they are open only to learned men, they have the advantage of the Śāstra, the scriptural and philosophical texts. But Bhakti Yoga is open even to people who have no learning, but have firm faith in a teacher, or in a family tradition of devotion, or have an inherent longing for God. By faith and longing alone, unaccompanied by learning, man can attain the spiritual *summum bonum*. The example of Sri Ramakrishna is the most noted and the most unquestionable example of this. Aspiration alone, unaided by any outside help, brought realisation to him. In the Sādhana of the various spiritual traditions that he practised afterwards, he sought no help from any texts. Faith in the words of the teachers who instructed him was his sole guide and help. In the past spiritual traditions of India also there are examples like Kāṇṇappa-naiṇār, who were low-born and ignorant, but attained to spiritual heights through faith.

This does not of course preclude learning from the followers

of the path of devotion, nor does it necessarily mean that they should be unlearned.

This is another passage wherein the Gītā gives equal status and importance to all the four recognised paths of spiritual discipline, without downgrading any one of them. In practice each is generally also combined with one or the other of them. Especially Karma and Yoga can be combined with Bhakti, and Yoga with Jñāna.

7. *Vr.26*: The Chapter started with the offer to describe Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña. Kṣetra was analysed and described in verses 5 and 6. But nothing was said about Kṣetrajña till now, except what was said in verse 2—‘know that I am the knower of the field’. Even the word Kṣetrajña comes only now in Verse 26, wherein it is taught that in all living beings, there is the union of Kṣetrajña and Kṣetra, (spirit and body). The word is left out again till the verses 33 and 34, where it is shown in what sense the Kṣetrajña in all bodies is the same. It is declared that just as the one sun illumines all bodies, evidently by his rays of light, so the Kṣetrajña in all bodies is a reflection, a part, of the one Kṣetrajña, the Supreme Being. The idea is made more clear in the analogy of the image of the one sun reflected in innumerable pots of water.

8. *Vrs.27-28*: The immanence of the Lord in everything is taught. Those who realise this, will never be entrenched in their small ego.

9. *Vr.29*: The Lord is ultimately the source of everything including actions. But He is not affected by them, because He functions through Prakṛti, His Power, which can be distinguished from Him, but which, being His Power, cannot be treated as different from Him. For this reason He is unattached to, and unaffected by, all the world transformations. The aspirant who realises his spiritual identity with Him, as a spark or ray or reflection of His, also participates in that Divine aloofness and unaffectedness. The same is more or less repeated in verse 31 also.

10. *Vr.30*: An important content of spiritual realisation is here described. It is the perception of the origin of the many from the One. The same was stated and elaborately pictured in the theophany vouchsafed to Arjuna in Chapter 11. It is stated there

tatr'aika-stham jagat kṛtsnam pravibhaktam anekadhā—the whole universe abiding in the One, yet divided as the multiplicity.

11. *Vr.33*: *Kṣetṛi* (Field-dweller) and *Kṣetrajña* (Field-knower) mean the same thing. It is the In-dwelling Spirit. It is stated here that basically that Indwelling Spirit is only the One in all and it is illustrated by the idea of the one sun illuminating numberless media without losing his universality and oneness. It has been discussed in note 5 also.

A complication arises when this is read with verse 22 where, after analysing the individual personality as a union of *Prakṛti* (body) and *Puruṣa* (spirit), it is stated that there is in the body also *Puruṣaḥ paraḥ*—a *Puruṣa* other than the one stated, a transcendent *Puruṣa*. This transcendent *Puruṣa* is what stands for the one universal sun brought as an analogy here. Though the individualised *Puruṣa* and the Universal *Puruṣa* may be one, we have to understand the former as distinct, just as a ray of the sun illuminating a surface of water gets an identity of its own, which is distinct, though not totally different, from the universal sun. The distinction is made by viewing the ray as a particle of the sun in association with a medium, a surface of water. It is this distinction without a difference that exists between the Individual Spirit and the Universal Spirit that is conveyed by the doctrine of His two *Prakṛtis* or *Saktis* (Powers) spoken of in Ch. 7.4-5—the *Aparā Prakṛti* being Nature and the *Parā Prakṛti* being the *Jīva*, the living spirit of man. Without accepting this 'distinction without a difference' (*bheda-abheda* or *identity-cum-difference*) no spiritual doctrine, dualistic or non-dualistic, could be formulated and stated in understandable concepts. If the distinctiveness of the *Jīva* is not granted, there is no one involved in *Samsāra* or transmigratory cycle, and the whole of the *Gītā* and other scriptures dealing with liberation become redundant. The *Gītā* therefore very clearly states in Ch. 15.5—a particle or part of Mine of untraceable origination has become the *Jīva*, and is involved in *Prakṛti*, having attracted to itself the mind and the senses. If this distinction is not granted, we shall logically have got to take shelter in a philosophy of *acosmism*, which is an ungraspable theoretical position.

Chapter XIV

गुणत्रयविभागयोगः

DIVISION ACCORDING TO THE THREE GUNAS

SUMMARY

The Lord as the Universal Father: (1-5) Sri Kṛṣṇa said: I shall declare to you that knowledge by which you can attain unity in nature with Me. My Nature is the universal womb in which I place the seed. From this all beings are born, and therefore know that beings born of all wombs, are born of my universal womb, and I am their originating father.

The Three Guṇas of Nature and their functions: (6-20) This Nature of mine has three aspects known as Guṇas—Constituents or Dispositions—, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, characterised by expressions like purity, passion and dullness i.e., happiness, energy and delusion, respectively. Everything in life is bound and dominated by these Guṇas, and man's life and action, and his progress hereafter, are determined by the ramifying influence of these on him. He is the wise man who is able to perceive that all the movements of his body-mind are really the movements of these Guṇas of which it is constituted, and that he, the real he, transcends them. When this illumination dawns, the Jīva is fit for the Immortal State. One who has thus risen above the Guṇas is called Trigunāṭīta.

Who is a Trigunāṭīta: (21-27) Arjuna now asks what are the signs of a Trigunāṭīta, and the account given in the reply is not much different from that of Sthitaprajña (II. 55-72) and the Bhakta (XII. 13-20). The Trigunāṭīta is thus described: He never identifies himself with the passing moods of elation, excitement and depression, which are the characteristics of the body-mind. In

all disturbances of the mental and physical environment, he remains unperturbed, seeing in them only movements of Prakṛti and not of himself. He is alike in pleasure and pain, to friend and foe, and he never feels he is the doer of anything. It is only one who serves Me with unswerving and exclusive devotion that can thus hope to overcome the dominance of the Guṇas; for I, the Lord of all, is the one on whom the Brahman-state has its foundation.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥ १ ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

Param bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānām jñānam uttamam /
yaj jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parāṁ siddhim ito gatāḥ //1//

Yat : Which jñātvā : knowing sarve : all munayaḥ : sages itaḥ : from the state of bondage parāṁ siddhim : highest perfection gatāḥ : attained, param : relating to the Supreme Being jñānānām : of knowledge uttamam : the most exalted jñānam : knowledge bhūyaḥ : again pravakṣyāmi : I shall expound.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. I shall now expound to you again that knowledge relating to the Supreme Being, the most exalted of all forms of knowledge, by gaining which all sages passed from this state of bondage into the highest perfection.¹

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।

सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ २ ॥

Idam jñānam upāśritya mama sādharṇyam āgatāḥ /
sarge'pi n'opajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca //2//

Idam : This jñānam : knowledge upāśritya : depending on mama sādharṇyam : unity with My nature āgatāḥ : those who have attained, sarge : at the start of a new creative cycle api : even na upajāyante : are not born, pralaye : in dissolution na vyathanti : not distressed ca : and.

2. Those who have attained unity with My nature through this knowledge are not born again even at the beginning of a new creative cycle, nor are they subjected to the distress of dissolution.

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्नाहं दधाम्यहम् ।

संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ 3 ॥

*Mama yonir mahad brahma tasmīn garbhaṁ dadhāmy aham /
saṁbhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānām tato bhavati Bhārata* //3//

Bhārata : O scion of the Bharata race! *mahat* : the great *Brahma* : Prakṛti, Nature *mama* : My *yonih* : womb; *tasmīn* : in that *aham* : I *garbham* : the germ (the impulse) of creation *dadhāmi* : impart; *tataḥ* : out of that *sarvabhūtānām* : of all beings *saṁbhavaḥ* : birth *bhavati* : takes place.

3. The Great Nature Prakṛti is like a womb to Me. I deposit therein the germ of creation, the creative impulse, out of which everything comes into being. 2

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।

तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ 4 ॥

*Sarva-yoniṣu Kaunteya mūrtayaḥ saṁbhavanti yāḥ /
tāsām brahma mahad yonir ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā* //4//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī *sarva yoniṣu* : in all wombs *yāḥ* : whatever *mūrtayaḥ* : forms *saṁbhavanti* : are born, *tāsām* : of them all *mahat brahma* : great Nature *yonih* : is the womb ; *aham* : I *pitā* : the father *bījapradāḥ* : the seed imparter.

4. O son of Kuntī! All creatures, whatever might be the womb from which they are born, have really the Great Nature as the womb—the source of their origin. And I am their father, the bestower of the seed.

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ 5 ॥

*Sattvaṁ rajas tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛti-sambhavāḥ /
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho dehe dehinam avyayam*

||5||

Mahābāho : O great warrior! *sattvaṁ* : Sattva (the balanced, the peaceful, the bright) *rajaḥ* : Rajas (passion, agitation) *tamaḥ* : Tamas (dullness, inertia) *iti* : these *prakṛtisambhavāḥ* : born of Prakṛti *guṇāḥ* : Guṇas (qualities or dispositions) *avyayam* : immortal *dehinam* : the soul *dehe* : in the body *nibadhnanti* : bind.

5. The three Guṇas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas born of Prakṛti, bind down the immortal soul to the body in its embodied state.³

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।

सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ 6 ॥

*Tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam /
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena c'ānagha*

||6||

Anagha : O sinless one! *tatra* : among these *nirmalatvāt* : owing to its essential purity *prakāśakam* : luminous (like a mirror capable of reflecting and revealing things) *anāmayam* : free from ill-health, harmonious *sattvaṁ* : the Guṇa called Sattva *sukhasaṅgena* : by identification with happiness *jñānasaṅgena* : by identification with knowledge *badhnāti* : binds.

6. Among these, Sattva is luminous and harmonious due to its essential purity. It binds the soul, O sinless one, with the feeling 'I am happy, I am full of knowledge.'⁴

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।

तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ 7 ॥

*Rajo rāg'ātmakam viddhi tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam /
tan nibadhnāti Kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam*

||7||

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *rajaḥ* : the Guṇa known as *Rajas rāgātmakam* : passion-based *tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam* : productive of longings and attachments, *viddhi* : know; *tat* : that *karma-saṅgena* : by attachment to work *dehinam* : the soul *nibadhnāti* : binds fast.

7. Know *Rajas* to be passion-based, and productive of longings for unattained objects and attachment for those in one's possession. It binds the (actionless) soul, O son of Kuntī, by entangling it in action (through the feeling 'I am the doer').

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।

प्रमादालस्यनिद्रामिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८ ॥

Tamas tu ajñāna-jam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinām /
pramād'ālasya-nidrābhis tan nibadhnāti Bhārata //8//

Bhārata : O scion of the *Bhārata* clan! *tamaḥ* : the Guṇa known as *Tamas tu* : as for *ajñānam* : ignorance-born *sarvadehinām* : to all embodied beings *mohanam* : delusion-producing *viddhi* : know; *tat* : that *pramādālasya-nidrābhiḥ* : by negligence, indolence, and sleep.

8. As for the Guṇa known as *Tamas*, it is ignorance-born and is productive of delusion in all beings. It binds the soul, O scion of the *Bhārata* clan! with the obsession of a disposition characterised by negligence, indolence and sleepiness.

सत्त्वं सुखे संजयति राजः कर्मणि भारत ।

ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे संजयत्युत ॥ ९ ॥

Sattvaṁ sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi Bhārata /
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayaty uta //9//

Bhārata : O scion of the *Bharata* race! *sattvam* : the Guṇa called *Sattva sukhe* : in happiness *sañjayati* : binds, *rajas* : *Rajas karmaṇi* : to action, *tamaḥ* : *Tamas tu* : indeed *jñānam* : knowledge *āvṛtya* : covering *pramāde* : to negligence *sañjayati* : binds.

9. Sattva enslaves one to a mood of joy and happiness, and Rajas to one of activity, while Tamas, which veils up knowledge, fills one with negligence and laziness.

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥ 10 ॥

*Rajas tamaś c'ābhibhūya sattvaṁ bhavati Bhārata /
rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaś c'aiva tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajas tathā ॥10॥*

Rajas : Rajas *tamaḥ* : Tamas *ca* : and *abhibhūya* : overpowering *sattvaṁ* : Sattva *bhavati* : prevails, *rajaḥ* : Rajas (prevails) *sattvaṁ* : (over-powering) Sattva *tamaḥ ca* : and Tamas; *tathā* : in the same way *tamaḥ* : Tamas (prevails) *sattvaṁ* : (overpowering) Sattva *Rajas ca* : and Rajas.

10. Overpowering Rajas and Tamas, Sattva prevails (sometimes); suppressing Sattva and Tamas, Rajas becomes dominant; and likewise dominating over Sattva and Rajas, Tamas holds the field.

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते ।

ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विबुधं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ 11 ॥

*Sarva-dvāreṣu dehe'smin prakāśa upajāyate /
jñānaṁ yadā tadā vidyād vibudhaṁ sattvaṁ ity uta ॥11॥*

Asmin dehe : In this body *sarvadvāreṣu* : in all gateways *jñānaṁ prakāśaḥ* : light of knowledge *yadā* : when *upajāyate* : is born, *tadā* : then *sattvaṁ* : Sattva *vibudham* : is dominant, *uta* : indeed *iti vidyāt* : should be known thus.

11. When through all the senses, which are the portals of the body, knowledge, happiness and similar characteristics manifest, then indeed it should be understood that Sattva is dominant.

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।

रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विबुधे भरतर्षभ ॥ 12 ॥

*Lobhaḥ pravṛttir-ārambhaḥ karmaṇāṁ aśamaḥ sprhā /
rajasya etāni jāyante vivṛdhe Bharatarṣabha ॥12॥*

Rajasi vivṛddhe : When Rajas prevails *lobhaḥ* : avarice *pravṛttiḥ* : extroversion *karmanām ārambhaḥ* : ceaseless planning and execution of works *aśamaḥ* : restlessness *spṛhā* : desire for enjoyments *etāni* : these *jāyante* : arise.

12. Avarice, extroversion, ceaseless planning and execution of works, restlessness, desire for enjoyments—these arise when Rajas prevails.

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।

तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥ 13 ॥

Aprakāśo' pravṛttiś ca pramādo moha eva ca /
tamasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe Kuru-nandana

||13||

Kurunandana : O Joy of the Kurus! *tamasi vivṛddhe* : when Tamas dominates *aprakāśaḥ* : lack of intelligence *apravṛttiḥ* : lack of effort *ca* : and *pramādaḥ* : heedlessness, negligence *mohaḥ* : delusion *eva* : also *ca* : and *etāni* : these *jāyante* : arise.

13. When Tamas dominates, there is lack of intelligence, lack of effort, negligence and delusion.

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।

तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥ 14 ॥

Yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṁ yāti deha-bhṛt /
tadottama-vidāṁ lokān amalān pratipadyate

||14||

Yadā tu : If *sattve pravṛddhe* : when Sattva is prevailing predominantly *dehabhṛt* : an embodied being *pralayaṁ yāti* : dies, *tadā* : then *uttamavidāṁ* : of the knowers of the highest *amalān* : pure *lokān* : regions *pratipadyate* : attains.

14. If one dies when Sattva is prevailing predominantly, then one attains to the pure regions of the knowers of the Highest.

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ।

तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥ 15 ॥

*Rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā karma-saṅgiṣu jāyate |
tathā pralīnas tamasi mūḍha-yoniṣu jāyate*

||15||

Rajasi : During the dominance of *Rajas pralayaṁ gatvā* : dying *karmasaṅgiṣu* : among beings attached to works *jāyate* : is born; *tathā* : likewise *tamasi* : in *Tamas pralīnaḥ* : dying *mūḍha-yoniṣu* : in the wombs of creatures without reason *jāyate* : is born.

15. Those who die when *Rajas* dominates are born among those attached to action (men); and likewise those dying in *Tamas* are born in the wombs of creatures without reason.

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।

रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥ 16 ॥

*Karmaṇaḥ sukr̥tasya'āhuḥ sāttvikam nirmalam phalam |
rajasas tu phalam duḥkham ajñānam tamaśaḥ phalam* ||16||

Sukr̥tasya karmaṇaḥ : Of virtuous action *phalam* : result *sāttvikam nirmalam* : conducive to spirituality and purity *āhuḥ* : is said to be; *rajasas tu* : of works dominated by *Rajas phalam* : result *duḥkham* : pain; *tamaśaḥ* : of *Tamas*-dominated work *phalam* : result *ajñānam* : is ignorance.

16. Virtuous actions promote spirituality and purity (*Sattva*), while the *Rajas*-dominated ones result in pain, and the *Tamas*-dominated ones in ignorance.

सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।

प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥ 17 ॥

*Sattvāt saṁjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva ca |
pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavato'jñānam eva ca*

||17||

Sattvāt : From Sattva *jñānam* : knowledge, *rajasāḥ* : from Rajas *lobhaḥ eva* : avarice *ca* : and *saṁjāyate* : arise; *tamasāḥ* : of Tamas *pramādamohau* : negligence and delusion *ajñānam eva ca* : and also ignorance.

17. From Sattva arises knowledge, and from Rajas, avarice. Negligence, delusion and also ignorance are the products of Tamas.

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ 18 ॥

Ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ /
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ //18//

Sattvasthāḥ : Those established in Sattva *ūrdhvaṁ* : upwards *gacchanti* : go, *rājasāḥ* : those established in Rajas *madhye* : in the middle *tiṣṭhanti* : remain, *jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthāḥ* : steeped in evil tendencies *tāmasāḥ* : those endowed with Tamas *adhaḥ gacchanti* : go downwards.

18. Those established in Sattva evolve to higher goals, while those abiding in Rajas remain in the mid-course. Steeped in evil tendencies, the Tamas-dominated ones degenerate.

नान्यं गुणेश्वरः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।

गुणेश्वरश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ 19 ॥

N'ānyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṁ yadā draṣṭā'nupaśyati /
guṇebhyaś ca param vetti mad-bhāvaṁ so'dhigacchati //19//

Yadā : When *draṣṭā* : the seer, the subject *guṇebhyaḥ anyam* : different from Guṇas *kartāram* : doer, agent *na anupaśyati* : does not see, *guṇebhyaḥ ca param* : that which is beyond the Guṇas *vetti* : knows, *saḥ* : he *madbhāvaṁ* : My state *adhigacchati* : attains.

19. When the subject (Jīva) recognises the Guṇas alone as the agent in all actions, and himself as transcending the Guṇas—then he attains to My state.⁵

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।

जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ 20 ॥

*Guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī deha-samudbhavān |
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-duḥkhair vimukto'mṛtam aśnute*

//20//

Dehī : The embodied being *dehasamudbhavān* : the source of this body *etān trīn* : these three *guṇān* : *Guṇas atītya* : transcending, *janma-mṛtyu-jarāduḥkhair* : from the misery of birth, death, and old age *vimuktaḥ* : liberated, *amṛtam* : state of immortality *aśnute* : attains to.

20. The embodied spirit (Jīva), having transcended the *Guṇas* from which the body has sprung, gains deliverance from the miseries of birth, death and old age, and attains to Immortality.

अर्जुन उवाच

कैलिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।

किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥ 21 ॥

Arjuna uvāca :

*Kair liṅgais trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho |
kim-ācāraḥ katham c'aitāṁs trīn guṇān ativartate*

//21//

Prabho : Lord! *etān* : these *trīn guṇān* : three *Guṇas atītaḥ* : one who has transcended *kaiḥ* : by what *liṅgaiḥ* : marks *bhavati* : is characterised, *kimācāraḥ* : how does he behave? *katham ca* : and how *etān trīn guṇān* : these three *Guṇas ativartate* : one rises above.

Arjuna said :

21. Lord! What are the marks of one who has transcended these three *Guṇas*? How does he behave? And how does he rise above them?

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ 22 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

*Prakāśam ca pravṛttim ca moham eva ca Pāṇḍava /
na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati* //22//

Pāṇḍava : O son of Pāṇḍu! (*yaḥ* : who) *prakāśam* : knowledge
pravṛttim : activity *moham* : delusion *eva* : also *ca* : and *sampra-
vṛttāni* : on becoming dominant *na dveṣṭi* : shows no aversion
nivṛttāni : in their absence *na kāṅkṣati* : does not long for.

The Blessed Lord said:

22. O son of Pāṇḍu! He who shows no aversion to know-
ledge, activity, or delusion when any of them is dominant,
nor longs for them when absent;

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।

गुणा चतन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ 23 ॥

*Udāsīnavad āsīno guṇair yo na vicālyate /
guṇā vartanta ity eva yo'vatiṣṭhati n'eṅgate* //23//

Yaḥ : Who *udāsīnavat* : like an unconcerned witness *āsīnaḥ* :
remaining *guṇaiḥ* : by the experience of sense objects, which are
the products of the *Guṇas na vicālyate* : is not perturbed, *yaḥ* :
who *guṇāḥ* : *Guṇas* (as instruments) *eva* : alone *vartante* : act
(on *Guṇas* as objects, and not oneself). *iti* : thus *avatiṣṭhati* :
remains firm *yaḥ* : who *na iṅgate* : does not waver.

23. Who remains like an unconcerned witness and is un-
perturbed by the *Guṇa*-born sense objects; who knows
that it is only the *Guṇa*-born senses and mind that act and
enjoy (and not his real self); who remains unwavering in all
situations;

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्जनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ 24 ॥

Sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ svasthaḥ sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ /
tulya-priy'āpriyo dhīras tulya-nind'ātma-saṁstutiḥ //24//

(Yah : who) *sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ* : alike in pleasure and in pain
svasthaḥ : self-poised *sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ* : viewing alike stone,
iron and gold *tulya-priyāpriyaḥ* : alike towards men and things,
dear or repugnant *yah* : who *dhīraḥ* : firm, unmoved *tulya-nin-*
dātma-saṁstutiḥ : alike in praise and in blame:

24. Who is self-poised alike in pleasure and in pain; who makes no difference between stone, iron, and gold; who is the same towards the loving and the hating; who is unmoved by praise and blame alike;

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ 25 ॥

mān'āpamānayos tulyas tulyo mītr'āripakṣayoh /
sarv'ārambha-parityāgī guṇ'ātītaḥ sa ucyate //25//

Mānāpamānayoḥ : in honour and in insult *tulyaḥ* : alike, *mītrāri*
pakṣayoḥ : towards friend and foe *tulyaḥ* : alike, *sarvārambha-*
parityāgī : who has totally abandoned the sense of agency *saḥ* :
such a person *guṇātītaḥ* : one who has transcended the Guṇas *iti* :
thus *ucyate* : is spoken of.

25. Who is alike in honour and in humiliation; who views a friend and a foe alike; who has abandoned all sense of agency—such a person is said to have transcended the Guṇas.

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।

स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ 26 ॥

Mām ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate /
sa guṇān samatīty'aitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate //26//

Yaḥ : Who *mām* : Me *ca* : and *avyabhicāreṇa* : unwavering and exclusive *bhakti yogena* : communion through love *sevate* : serves *saḥ* : he, *etān* : these *guṇān* : Guṇas *samatītya* : transcending, *brahmabhūyāya* : to become Brahman *kalpate* : attains fitness.

26. He who serves Me through the communion of unswerving and exclusive devotion, transcends the Guṇas and attains fitness to become Brahman.

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।

शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥ 27 ॥

Brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasy'avyayasya ca /
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasy'aikāntikasya ca //27//

Hi : Indeed *aham* : I am *Brahmaṇaḥ* : of Brahman *pratiṣṭhā* : basic support, *avyayasya* : unending, incorruptible *amṛtasya* : of immortality, Mokṣa, *śāśvatasya* : of eternal *dharmasya* : law *ca* : and, *ekāntikasya sukhasya* : of absolute bliss *ca* : and *pratiṣṭhā* : seat.

27. Indeed, I (Kṛṣṇa, the God of love and grace, or Pratyagātman, the true Inner Self), am the basic support of Brahman—of the incorruptible state of Mokṣa, of the Eternal Law and of undending Bliss. 7

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे गुणत्रयविभागयोगो
नाम चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥ 14 ॥

NOTES

1. *Vrs.1-2*: This chapter deals with the description of the nature and functions of the three Guṇas, the constituents of Prakṛti, which cause bondage to the Puruṣa. How a knowledge of the Guṇas and their functions is praised here as leading to liberation may look a bit puzzling at first. But its relevancy can

be easily perceived on the analogy of a patient undergoing treatment. It is important for him to know what are contra-indicated in the matter of diet and habits of life while the treatment is going on. For an intelligent patient it is also advantageous to know something about the nature of his disease. In the same way an aspirant must understand what bondage consists in and what he has to guard against in the pursuit of the spiritual ideal. Hence the importance of this and the succeeding chapters in which all aspects of the doctrine of Prakṛti and its three Guṇas are treated.

2. *Vrs.3-4*: Here the Gītā registers its divergence from the Sāṅkhyan conception of Prakṛti and Puruṣa as independent entities. They are only the powers of God as already stated in Chaps. 10 and 13 (Cf. Note 5 of Ch. 13).

It is sometimes said that the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man are special doctrines of Christianity. But nowhere has this doctrine been stated so plainly and powerfully as here in the Gītā.

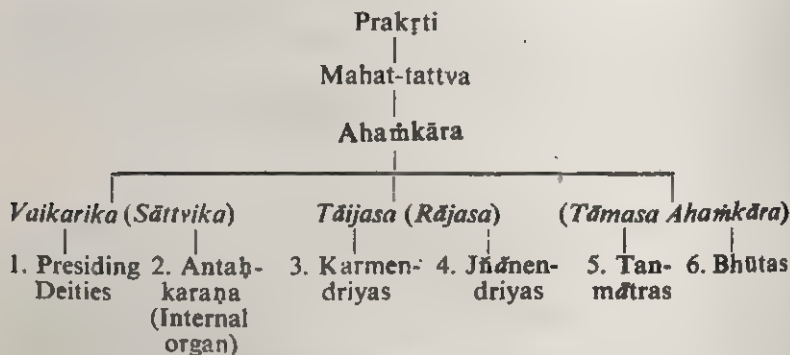
3. *Vr.5*: The doctrine of Guṇas of Prakṛti—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—was mentioned here and there in the Gītā in many places, but in this and subsequent chapters to the last we get an elaborate consideration of their effect on the character and personality of man. Therefore, as a background understanding of one of the fundamental ideas behind the theory of Prakṛti and its three Guṇas will be helpful, the same is given below in a nutshell.

Prakṛti is the Sanskrit expression for Nature. It does not mean matter as we understand it today, because the matter of the scientist is a late evolute of Prakṛti. It is an expression and a theory introduced by the the Sāṅkhyia philosophy, and this Sāṅkhyia conception of it and its analysis have entered into all systems of Indian philosophy and even the sciences as they were developed in ancient India.

Prakṛti has three constituents, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas called Guṇas. These three are in a state of equilibrium. It is on the disturbance of this equilibrium that evolution and involution of the creative cycle depends. A Guṇa in ordinary language means a quality or attribute, but the Guṇas of Prakṛti are its constituents. Even the word 'constituent' is misleading. Perhaps 'dispositions'

may be more appropriate. They cannot be isolated as substances or as quantities but are known only through their effects in the form of various qualities and substances that constitute the world of experience and are classifiable into these three groups. In this and succeeding chapters the teaching on the Guṇas is elaborated through a consideration of their manifestations. As far as this threefold analysis of Prakṛti into Sattva, Rajas and Tamas is concerned, Sattva has effects like luminosity, peace, knowledge and pleasure and objects with such properties; Rajas expresses as dynamism, passion, attachment and the like; and Tamas, as inertia, darkness, dullness, ignorance and the like. Objects partaking of such characteristics are the products of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas respectively.

While the Gītā is mainly concerned with the psychological and spiritual aspects of the Guṇas, the Sāṃkhya philosophy, which originally propounded this doctrine of Prakṛti with its three constituents called Guṇas, derived all the cosmic categories as their evolutes, and the whole universe in its subtle and gross aspects, as the permutations and combinations of these categories. We give below a table showing Prakṛti and all its evolutes in full:



1. *Presiding Deities*: These are fourteen—Dik, Vāyu, Āditya, Varuṇa and Aswins, controlling the five Jñānendriyas, (organs of knowledge); Agni, Indra, Viṣṇu, Mitra, and Prajāpati controlling the five Karmendriyas (organs of action); and Candra, Brahma, Rudra and Kṣetrajña presiding over the four aspects of Antaḥkaraṇa. These are however excluded in the sāṃkhyan analysis.

2. *Antaḥkaraṇa*: This is what is ordinarily called the mind,

but is termed 'inner organ' to show that it includes several aspects and stands in contrast to the outer organs to be described separately. Its four aspects are: mind, intellect, egoity, and mind-stuff (Chitta). Each of the last mentioned four deities presides over each of these aspects. The above two items (1 & 2) are the products of Sattvika-ahamkāra.

3. *Karmendriyas*: These are the organs of action and are five in number—speech, hands, feet, excretory organs and the generative organ. The five deities controlling these are mentioned under item 1 above.

4. *Jñānendriyas*: These are the five organs of knowledge. They are: ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose. The deities controlling these are mentioned above in item 1.

The above two items (3 & 4) are the products of Rājasa-ahamkāra.

5&6. *Tanmātras & Bhūtas*: The Tanmātras are the subtle essences of elements and the Bhūtas, their gross expressions. They are causally related. The details under these two items are stated below in the order of their origination. Out of Tāmasa-ahamkāra emerges Tanmātra Sound; and from it Bhūta Sky; from Bhūta Sky, Tanmātra Touch; from Tanmātra Touch, Bhūta Air; from Bhūta Air, Tanmātra Rūpa; from Tanmātra Rūpa, Bhūta Tejas; from Bhūta Tejas, Tanmātra Taste; from Tanmātra Taste, Bhūta Water; and from Bhūta Water, Tanmātra Smell; and from Tanmātra Smell, Bhūta Earth. Each Tanmātra, which is also a form of sensation, transmits that particular form of sensation to the Bhūta coming out of it, and each Bhūta to the Tanmātra springing from it, the succeeding category thereby inheriting all the properties of the earlier one. In sāmkyā proper there are only 24 categories (cf. p. 206)

These are the psychological and physical evolutes of Prakṛti, out of whose permutations and combinations the whole world of mind and matter has evolved. How the Guṇas bind the spirit is described in the subsequent verses.

4. *Vr.6*: The Jñāna or knowledge referred to here is not the intuitive illumination of non-duality, nor the knowledge of the right relationship of the Jīvā with God. It means mere intellectualism.

5. *Vrs. 19-26*: Spiritual maturity consists in a split in consciousness, by which the conscious centre (Puruṣa or Jīva) ceases to identify himself with the movements of Prakṛti and its evolutes consisting in body-mind, and instead of feeling 'I act', stands poised in the witnesshood of Divine Consciousness, in whose presence Prakṛti functions without in the least affecting Him. Just as God is unaffected by the world, of which He is the creator, sustentator and destroyer, the Jīvā, by becoming a participant in His Consciousness, also shares that unaffectedness. In bondage the Puruṣa identifies himself with the movements of Prakṛti, and thus feels himself to be the actor and enjoyer. When identification with Prakṛti and its Guṇas is snapped by identification with the Divine Consciousness, the Puruṣa too, like God, becomes neither the actor nor the enjoyer, but the unaffected witness. The state of mind of one who has transcended the Guṇas—the *triguṇātīta*—is described in the succeeding verses.

According to the Gītā this transcendence of the Guṇas and the unity with Divine Consciousness are attained by one who serves the Lord through the communion of unswerving and exclusive devotion *avyabhicāriṇā bhakti-yogena*. (14.26). The Yoga recommended here is the same as what has been recommended in the 12th chapter in reply to Arjuna's question—who is the better of the two, Bhaktas who worship Him in ever-steadfast devotion as the Divine Person, or those who contemplate on the Akṣara and the Avyakta (the Imperishable and the Transcendent).

It is however to be noted that the Gītā often uses Jñāna or knowledge of God, and Bhakti or the love of Him, almost as identical. For example, the Lord opens this chapter with the declaration that He is going to give out the highest of all forms of knowledge—*jñānānām jñānamuttamam*. And yet He says in this verse of that very chapter that it is one who serves Him in utter devotion that attains to this transcendence of the Guṇas (which is also said to be the state of one with Jñāna).

6. *Vr. 27*: The meanings of the expressions 'to become Brahma' (*Brahmabhūyāva*) and 'I am the support of Brahman' (*Brahmaṇohi pratiṣṭhāham*) are difficult to derive. The first verse and the expression 'fitness to attain Brahman' contained in it would have been very easy to understand, had it not been for the

next verse where it is stated, 'I am the support of Brahman'. Understood in the ordinary sense of Brahman as the Supreme Absolute Being, the first verse would only mean that when a man attains to mature devotion, he becomes fit to intuit the Absolute also. But when immediately after, it is said in verse 27, "I, the Lord, am the support of Brahman", it becomes a riddle. For, in the usual Advaitic ideology the Impersonal Absolute is the support of Isvara, the Personal Being, and of the whole manifested universe. But here it is turned the other way, saying that the Personal is the support of the Impersonal Absolute. Some schools of Vedantins, who are not pure Non-dualists, actually understand it in this way and maintain that Kṛṣṇa, the God of love, is the support of the all-pervading Impersonal Caitanya, Consciousness, just as the disk of the sun is of the spreading formless light.

To get over the obvious difficulty, pure non-dualists maintain that here 'I', Kṛṣṇa, stands for the Nirguṇa Brahman (the Impersonal Absolute), and that Brahman means here Saguṇa-Brahman (the Personal Brahman or Isvara). How arbitrary this interpretation is, is obvious.

The difficulty seems to arise from the fact that the word Brahman is used here in a peculiar sense. In Sanskrit literature the word Brahma occurs both in its neuter and masculine forms as Brahman and Brahmā, to indicate the Supreme Being and the creator Brahmā respectively. When various case endings are added and compound words are formed, it will be difficult to distinguish it except from the context. This gives scope for different schools to interpret it in their own way. Besides, the word is used in different meanings in different contexts, by all commentators. Brahma means Veda in 3.14—*brahmākṣaraśamudbhavam*. It means Nature in 14.3—*mama yonir mahadbhrama*. It is identified with Om-kāra in 8.13—*Om ityekākṣaram brahma*. In 8.3 it is equated with the transcendent Absolute—*akṣaram brahma paramam*. According to some commentators Brahma in the present context means Jīva.

Those varying meanings of the word Brahma in the *Gītā* are recognised by all the traditional interpreters of the Text, but there is another sense for the word, especially when it is combined with suffixes like Brahma-bhūta, Brahma-bhūyam etc. It is the

view of modern interpreters of the Gītā like Zaehner, who have made a comparative study of the Gītā and Buddhist scriptures in Pāli, that through such words formed by adding suffixes to Brahman like *Brahma-bhūta*, *Brāhmī-sthiti*, *Brahma-nirvāṇa*, *Brahma-bhūyam* etc, the Gītā is trying to absorb certain current Buddhist ideologies into its thought. Every one accepts that Sāṃkhyan thought has been absorbed by the Gītā through the acceptance of the Sāṃkhya analysis of reality into Puruṣa and Prakṛti, and of the latter into the twentyfour categories. But the Gītā annexes the Sāṃkhya's Puruṣa and Prakṛti into its own ideology by positing a Puruṣottama, in whom the Prakṛti and Puruṣa find their unity. It is therefore nothing unusual or strange, if certain Buddhist ideas have entered into the Gītā and got amalgamated with its ideology.

Now in Buddhist Pāli literature *Brahma-bhūta* is a common expression to describe one who has attained Nirvāṇa. The usual phrase is: *nicehāto nibbūto sīti-bhūto sukha-patisamvedi brahma-bhūtena āttana*—without craving, appeased, cooled, experiencing joy, with his self Brahman (*Digha Nikāya* III.233). This is the description of those who have attained Nirvāṇa like the Buddha and the Arhats. It is a state in which 'becoming' and individuality are transcended into a boundless peace, free from passions and cravings, which is thus described in *Udāna* 55. "Just as, whatever streams flow into the mighty ocean and whatever floods pour from the sky, there is no shrinkage or overflow seen thereby in the mighty ocean, even so though many mendicants pass finally away into that condition of Nirvāṇa, which has no remainder, yet there is no shrinkage nor over-flow in that condition of Nirvāṇa seen thereby" (quoted and translated by Zaehner). Many of these descriptions of *Brahma-bhūta-āttana*—with self become Brahman—is very much reminiscent of the description of the sage—the *sthītaprajña*—in the 2nd chapter of the Gītā, whose state is called *Brāhmī-sthiti* which ends in *Brahma-nirvāṇa*.

What is important here is that *Brāhmī-sthiti*, *Brahma-bhūyam* etc., do not seem to be the intuition of the Supreme Being, but a state mid-way, through which alone true intuition is attained. It is stated here in Gītā 14.26, that this state of *Brāhmī-sthiti* or *Brahma-bhūyam* is attained through steady devotion to the Lord. For the Lord, it is declared here, is the support of Brahman, *the state of a steady mind free from cravings and passions and established in a*

sense of unruffled stillness. On such a mental state only can true intuition arise. The intuitions of persons who have not struck this dimension of their being, are the projections of the impressions and desires with which their minds are full. That dimension of boundless peace, free from passions and cravings, which the Buddhist accepted as the final state, is, according to the declaration of the Gītā here, only the state nearest to the Lord, having its support in Him.

This idea is made very clear in the last or the 18th chapter of the Gītā. There from verse 49 to 53 are given the disciplines to attain to the state of *Brahma-bhūyam*—the state of being Brahman. If this were the culmination of spiritual attainment, the Gītā must have stopped with it. But it definitely puts it as an intermediary state of attainment, and then proceeds to present the still higher steps in verses 54 to 56. The *Brahma-bhūta*, it is said, becomes peaceful, without sorrows and fears, and is established in an attitude of equality towards all beings. He then gains supreme devotion to the Lord and through devotion, comes to have an intimate understanding of Him and his majesty. Knowing Him thus in truth and in reality he enters into Him. (Cf. Notes 6 and 7 of the 18th Chapter).

It is plainly stated here in the passage referred to above that *Brahma-bhūta* has not yet attained to the highest enlightenment. He has come to have that moral perfection to attain to the highest form of devotion—*mad-bhaktim parām*, which is a higher form or development of Bhakti than what is indicated in 14.26. It is not the Bhakti of the early stages of spiritual development when it is motivated by individual fulfilments. Even the desire for Mokṣa is an individual fulfilment. This supreme Bhakti is spontaneous, motiveless, and unswerving. It is accompanied with illumination, and the devotee enters into Divine life. This consummation, it must be noted, is the spiritual fulfilment, of which the earlier stage is called *Brahma-bhūyam* i.e., of being established in the unbounded state of bliss free from individuality, craving and passion.

Chapter XV

पुरुषोत्तमयोगः

THE MYSTERY OF THE ALL-PERVADING PERSON

SUMMARY

The Mystic Aśvattha tree: (1-3) Sri Kṛṣṇa said: The created world is like a mighty Pīpal Tree, rooted above in the unseen, with branches spreading everywhere in the world of the seen. Entangled in its branches, no one understands its source, nor does one grasp the utterly flimsy and momentary nature of the values it yields. With the powerful weapon of non-attachment, cut, O man, the taproots that bind you to it, and go into the empyrean heights to seek Me, its source—the Supreme Puruṣottama.

Transcendence and immanence of the Divine: (4-15) I am transcendent, beyond time and space, but yet immanent in Nature and in all beings—as light in the sun and other luminaries, as gravitation that keeps the galaxies in position, as fertility in soil, as the digestive powers in all living beings, and above all in the hearts of all as the living spirit from whom life, memory, knowledge and everything else proceed.

The Puruṣottama: (16-20) My being has a threefold aspect. As the changeful Matter I constitute the bodies of all (*Kṣara Puruṣa*). As the unchanging Witness Consciousness, the Jīva, I dwell in all these bodies (*Akṣara Puruṣa*). But I am, above all, the Puruṣottama, (the Supreme Puruṣa), who manifests all these, supports all these, indwells them all, and yet remains the Transcendent Spirit, an iota even of whom is not affected by all these manifestations. He who contemplates on this mystery that I am, the Supreme Puruṣottama, he understands all and offers himself to Me with his whole being.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्रादुरव्ययम् ।

छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानी यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥ 1 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

Ūrdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākham aśvattham prāhur avyayam /
chandāṁsi yasya parṇāni yas tam veda sa veda-vit //1//

Ūrdhva-mūlam : Rooted in the most High *adhaḥśākham* : with branches below *avyayam* : imperishable, eternal *aśvattham* : Aśvattha, the Tree of this transitory world *prāhuḥ* : they (scriptures) speak of; *yasya* : of which *chandāṁsi* : Vedic hymns *parṇāni* : are the leaves; *yaḥ* : who *tam* : it *veda* : knows, *saḥ* : he *vedavit* : is a knower of the Veda.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. The scriptures speak of the eternal Aśvattha, the World Tree, whose roots are in the Most High, branches in the lower regions, and leaves in Vedic hymns. He who knows it, understands the Veda really.¹

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।

अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥ 2 ॥

Adhaś c'ordhvaṁ prasṛtās tasya śākhā

guṇa-pravṛddhā viṣaya-pravālāḥ /

adhaś ca mūlāny anusantatāni

karm'ānubandhīni manuṣya-loke

//2//

Guṇa-pravṛddhāḥ : Nourished by the Guṇas *viṣayapravālāḥ* : having the sense objects as sprouts *tasya* : of it *śākhāḥ* : branches *adhaḥ* : below *ūrdhvaṁ* : above *ca* : and *prasṛtāḥ* : are spreading; *karmānubandhīni* : generating the bondage of action *mūlāni* : secondary roots *adhaḥ* : below *ca* : and *manuṣya-loke* : in the world of men *anusantatāni* : are stretching.

2. Nourished by the Guṇas and covered with the budding foliage of sense objects, its branches spread into regions high

and low. Stretching forth on the ground below in the world of men, are its secondary roots, entangling man in the bondage of action.

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलमसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन चित्त्वा ॥ 3 ॥

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ 4 ॥

Na rūpam asy'eha tath'opalabhvate
n'ānto na c'ādir na ca saṁpratiṣṭhā /
aśvattham enam suvirūḍha-mūlam
asaṅga-śastreṇa dṛḍhena chitvā 1/3/

Tataḥ padam tat parimārgitavyam
yasmin gatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ /
tam eva c'ādyam puruṣam prapadye
yataḥ pravṛttiḥ prasṛtā purāṇī 1/4/

Iha : Here i.e., while involved in worldly life *asya* : of it *rūpam* : form *na upalabhyate* : is not understood; *tathā* : in the same way *ādiḥ* : its beginning *na* : not *ca* : and; *antaḥ* : end *na* : not *ca* : and; *saṁpratiṣṭhā* : its foundation *na* : not; *suvirūḍhamūlam* : firmly rooted *enam* : this *aśvattham* : *Aśvattha* (the World Tree) *dṛḍhena* : powerful *asaṅgaśastreṇa* : weapon of non-attachment *chitvā* : cutting asunder, *tataḥ* : after that *yataḥ* : from where *purāṇī pravṛttiḥ* : the eternal process *prasṛtā* : streamed forth, *tam* : Him *eva ca* : alone *ādyam puruṣam* : Primeval Person *prapadye* : seek as refuge, *iti* : resolving thus *yasmin gatāḥ* : attaining to which state *bhūyaḥ* : again *na nivartanti* : do not come back, *tat* : that *padam* : state *parimārgitavyam* : is to be sought.

3-4. For one involved in worldly life, the form of this World-Tree is not visible, nor its origin, nor its end, nor its foundation. Cutting asunder the firmly rooted *Aśvattha* (World-Tree) with the powerful axe of non-attachment, and saying, "I seek refuge in that Primeval Person from whom this eternal

cosmic activity has streamed forth", man should seek that Status, attaining to which there is no more return to this life of Samsāra.

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।

द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञैर्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ 5 ॥

Nirmāna-mohā-jita-saṅga-doṣā

adhyātma-nityā vinivṛtta-kāmāḥ |

dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha-samjñair

gacchanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayam tat

||5||

Nirmānamohāḥ : Free from pride and delusion, *jitasāṅgadoṣāḥ* : having overcome the evil of attachment, *adhyātmānityāḥ* : ever-absorbed in spiritual pursuit; *vinivṛttā kāmāḥ* : free from desires, *sukha-duḥkha-samjñaiḥ* : called pleasure and pain *dvandvaiḥ* : from the pair of opposites *vimuktāḥ* : freed from, *amūḍhāḥ* : delivered from ignorance, *tat* : that *avyayam* : eternal *padam* : state *gacchanti* : go to.

5. They who are free from pride and delusion, who have no attachments, who are ever absorbed in spiritual pursuits, who are free from all worldly desires, who are unaffected by the varying situations of pleasurable and painful nature—such persons, freed from ignorance, attain to the Eternal State.

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।

यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ 6 ॥

Na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ |

yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama

||6||

Tat : That *sūryaḥ* : the sun *na bhāsayate* : does not illumine, *śaśāṅkaḥ na* : nor the moon, *na pāvakaḥ* : nor fire, *yad gatvā* : having reached which *na nivartante* : one does not return, *tat* : that *mama* : My *paramam dhāma* : Supreme Abode.

6. That the sun does not illumine, nor the moon, nor the fire; (for it is the Light of Pure Consciousness). Having attained It, the Spirit does not return again to the life of Samsāra. Such is My Supreme Abode.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ 7 ॥

Mam'aivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ /
manaḥ-ṣaṣṭhānī'ndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati

||7||

Mama eva : My own *sanātanaḥ* : immortal *aṁśaḥ* : portion *jīva-bhūtaḥ* : having become an embodied soul *jīvaloke* : in the world of living beings *prakṛtisthāni* : abiding in Prakṛti *manaḥ-ṣaṣṭhāni* : with mind as the sixth *indriyāṇi* : senses *karṣati* : attracts.

7. A fragment of Myself, immortal in nature, having become the embodied spirit in the world of the living, attracts to Himself the mind and the five senses born of Prakṛti.²

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।

गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुगन्धानिवाशयात् ॥ 8 ॥

Śarīraṁ yad avāpnoti yac c'āpy utkrāmatī śvaraḥ /
grhītv'aitāni saṁyāti vāyur gandhān iv'āśayāt

||8||

Śvaraḥ : Jiva or the lord of the body *śarīram* : body *yat* : when *avāpnoti* : acquires, *yat* : when *ca* : and *api* : also *utkrāmatī* : leaves, *vāyuh* : air *āśayāt gandhān iva* : as smell from their seats *etāni* : these *grhītvā* : taking with, *saṁyāti* : goes.

8. When he gets a new body or abandons an old one, the Jiva, the lord of the body, moves, carrying them (the mind and the senses) with him, as the wind carries smells from their seats (in flowers and the like)³.

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥ 9 ॥

Śrotram cakṣuḥ sparśanam ca rasanam ghrāṇam eva ca |
adhiṣṭhāya manaś c'āyam viṣayān upasevate //9//

Ayam : This Jiva *śrotram* : hearing *cakṣuḥ* : sight *sparśam* : touch
ca : and *rasanam* : taste *ghrāṇam* : smell *eva ca* : as also *manaḥ* :
mind *ca* : and *adhiṣṭhāya* : presiding over; in identification with
viṣayān : sense objects *upasevate* : experiences.

9. In identification with the senses like hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell, this Jīva experiences their respective objects.

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥ 10 ॥

Utkrāmantam sthitam vā'pi bhuñjānam vā guṇānvitam |
vimūḍhā n'anupaśyanti paśyanti jñāna-cakṣuṣaḥ //10//

Utkrāmantam : On departing, *sthitam* : while staying, *bhuñjānam* :
experiencing *vā* : or, *guṇānvitam vā api* : or when remaining identi-
fied with the Guṇas, *vimūḍhāḥ* : the deluded *na anupaśyanti* : do
not perceive him; *jñānacakṣuṣaḥ* : those with the eye of wisdom
paśyanti : see.

10. The deluded do not recognise the Spirit (Jīva) when, in identification with the Guṇas, he tenants or leaves a body, or when he experiences objects through it; but those endowed with the eye of wisdom do.

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसाः ॥ 11 ॥

Yatanto yoginaś c'ainam paśyanty ātmany avasthitam |
yatanto'py akṛt'ātmāno n'ainam paśyanty acetasaḥ //11//

Yatantaḥ : Striving *yoginaḥ ca* : Yogis *ātmani* : within themselves *avasthitam* : dwelling *enam* : this Atman *paśyanti* : perceive; *yatantaḥ api* : though striving *akṛtātmānaḥ* : the impure and devotionless *acetasaḥ* : the unregenerate men *enam* : them *na paśyanti* : do not perceive.

11. The striving contemplatives perceive the Atman within themselves, but not the impure and the unregenerate, though they be striving.

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।

यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥ 12 ॥

Yad āditya-gataṁ tejo jagad bhāsayate'kḥilam /
yac candramasi yac c'āgnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam //12//

Ādityagatam : Residing in the sun *yat* : which *tejaḥ* : light *akhilam jagat* : the whole universe *bhāsayate* : illumines, *candramasi* : in the moon *yat* : which *agnau ca* : and in Agni *yat* : which, *tat* : that *tejaḥ* : splendour *māmakam* : mine *viddhi* : know.

12. That light of the sun which illumines the whole universe, which is present in the moon and in fire likewise—know that splendour to be Mine.⁴

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।

पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥ 13 ॥

Gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy aham ojasā /
puṣṇāmi c'auśadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā ras'ātmakaḥ //13//

Aham : I *ojasā* : by spiritual energy *gām* : the earth *āviśya* : entering *ca* : and *bhūtāni* : all beings *dhārayāmi* : sustain; *rasāt-makaḥ* : watery *somaḥ* : moon *bhūtvā* : becoming *sarvāḥ* : all *ośadhīḥ* : herbs *puṣṇāmi* : nourish *ca* : and.

13. Entering the earth by My spiritual energy, I sustain all beings residing in it. As the watery moon, I nourish all herbs.

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।

प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ 14 ॥

*Aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇinām deham āśritaḥ |
prāṇ'āpāna-samāyuktaḥ pacāmy annam catur-vidham* //14//

Aham : I *prāṇinām* : of living beings *deham* : body *āśritaḥ* : based in *vaiśvānaraḥ* : the digestive Fire *bhūtvā* : manifesting as *prāṇāpānasamāyuktaḥ* : in combination with Prāṇa and Apāna *catur-vidham annam* : four kinds of food *pacāmi* : digest.

14. Based in the body of living beings, I manifest as the digestive Fire, Vaiśvānara, and in combination with the vital energies known as Prāṇa and Apāna, digest the four kinds of food taken by them.

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिश्चानिमपोहनं च ।

वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ 15 ॥

*Sarvasya c'āham hṛdi saṁniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtiḥ jñānam apohanam ca |
vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd-veda-vid eva c'āham* //15//

Sarvasya : Of all *ca* : and *hṛdi* : in the heart *aham* : I *saṁniviṣṭaḥ* : reside; *mattaḥ* : from Me *smṛtiḥ* : memory *jñānam* : knowledge *apohanam* : their loss *ca* : and; *sarvaiḥ vedaiḥ* : through all the Vedas *ca* : and *vedyaḥ* : the one to be known *aham* : I *eva* : verily; *vedāntakṛt* : the originator of the Vedānta *vedavid* : knower of the Veda *ca* : and *aham* : I *eva* : also.

15. I abide in the hearts of all. From Me arise the remembrance and knowledge of the spiritual Verity as also their effacement. The original teacher of the Vedānta I am, as also the knower of the Veda.

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ 16 ॥

*Dvāv imau puruṣau loka kṣaraś c'ākṣara eva ca |
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭa-stho'kṣara ucyate* //16//

Loke : In the world *kṣaraḥ* : the perishable *ca* : and *akṣaraḥ* : the imperishable *eva* : indeed *ca* : and *imau* : these *dvau* : two *puruṣau* : Puruṣas there are; *kṣaraḥ* : the perishable *sarvāṇi* : all *bhūtāni* : manifested beings; *akṣaraḥ* : the imperishable *kūṭasthaḥ* : aloof and unchanging or in the alternative, the Creative power *Māyā Śakti* the source of falsity *ucyate* : is called.

16. It is well known that there are two types of Puruṣas (spirits or categories)—the Kṣara or the Perishable and Akṣara, the Imperishable. The Kṣara consists of all the Jīvas in embodiment who are subject to change, while the Akṣara, consists of the collectivity of liberated Jīvas who remain aloof from changeful matter and are unaffected by it; (Or in the alternative, the Creative Power *Māyā-śakti*, which is the source of all falsity and the cause of endless *Samsāra*)⁵

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।

यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ 17 ॥

Uttamaḥ puruṣas tu anyañ param'ātm'ety udāhṛtaḥ /
yo loka-trayam āviśya bibharti avyaya īśvaraḥ //17//

Paramātmā : The highest of Spirits *iti* : thus *udāhṛtaḥ* : called *yaḥ* : who *avyayaḥ* : eternal *īśvaraḥ* : Lord *lokatrayam* : the three worlds *āviśya* : pervading *bibharti* : sustains, *saḥ uttamaḥ puruṣaḥ* : that Supreme Being *tu* : but *anyañ* : is yet another.

17. But there is yet another Puruṣa, known as the Supreme Being or the Puruṣottama, who is the highest of spirits, and who pervades all the three worlds and sustains them.

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ 18 ॥

Yasmāt kṣaram atīto'ham akṣarād api c'ottamaḥ /
ato'smi loka vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ //18//

Yasmāt : For the reason that *aham* : I *kṣaram* : the Perishable *atītaḥ* : transcends *akṣarāt api* : than the Imperishable *uttamaḥ* : superior *ca* : and; *ataḥ* : for this reason *loke* : in the world *vede* : in the Vedas *ca* : and *puruṣottamaḥ* : as Puruṣottama, as the Supreme *Puruṣa prathitaḥ* : celebrated *asmi* : I am.

18. As I transcend the Perishable and am also superior to the Imperishable, I am well-known as the Puruṣottama (the Supreme Being) in both the Vedic and secular literature.

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥ 19 ॥

Yo mām evam asammūḍho jānāti puruṣ'ottamam /
sa sarvavid bhajati mām sarva bhāvena bhārata //19//

Bhārata : O scion of Bharata's clan! *yaḥ* : who *asammūḍhaḥ* : undeluded *evam* : in this way *puruṣottamam* : as Puruṣottama *jānāti* : knows, *saḥ* : he *sarvavid* : one having a true knowledge of the Totality *sarvabhāvena* : with all his heart *mām* : Me *bhajati* : worships.

19. He who knows Me in this way as the Puruṣottama, he understands the true nature of this Totality, and he loves and adores Me with his whole being.

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मया नघ ।
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ 20 ॥

Iti guhyatamam śāstram idam uktam mayā'nagha /
etad buddhvā buddhimān'syāt kṛta-kṛtyaś ca Bhārata //20//

Anagha : O sinless one! *iti* : thus *guhyatamam* : the most profound in all spiritual lore *idam* : this *śāstram* : spiritual doctrine *mayā* : by Me *uktam* : revealed; *etat* : this *buddhvā* : understanding *buddhimān* : one having attained wisdom *kṛtakṛtyaḥ* : one with the satisfaction of having done one's duties *ca* : and *syāt* : shall become.

20. O sinless one! This spiritual doctrine, the most profound of all in the sacred lore, has now been revealed by Me. A true understanding of it makes a man really wise and established in a sense of total fulfilment.⁶

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे पुरुषोत्तमयोगो
नाम पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः ॥ 15 ॥

NOTES

1. *Vrs.1-4*: By a figure of speech the transmigratory cycle or *Samsāra* is compared to an *Aśvattha* tree (Pipal tree) with the roots in 'the Above' i.e., the Supreme Being. He is called 'the Above', not in a physical sense, but because He is the Highest Being. *Aśvattha* is interpreted to mean that which does not last even for tomorrow—*śva api na sthāsyate*. It is the realm of change, of becoming. The categories from *Mahattattva* down are evolved from *Prakṛti*, the Power of Brahman. Being later in evolution and grosser in nature they are called the trunk and the branches spreading downwards. From the evolutes of *Prakṛti* or the categories, are formed the various worlds, and these are compared to subsidiary branches that extend below i.e., below the human level as subhuman, animal and vegetable creations, and above i.e., as the realm of the *Devas* up to that of *Īśatyaloka*. They are augmented by the constituents of *Prakṛti*—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, of which everything in the creative scheme is formed. Besides the primary root in 'the Above', there are the subsidiary roots which subsist in the human world where beings acquire *Karma* for enjoyment in spheres above and below. It is the *Karma* thus generated that determines the evolution and degradation of the *Jīvas* involved in the scheme of *Samsāra*.

Now looking from the point of view of man, with the aid of his senses and intelligence, he is not able to discover the real nature of *Samsāra* in two respects: (1) One fails to find the Supreme Being who is the support of it. For, we see Nature, and the scientific intelli-

gence, which marks the highwater mark of man's intellectual growth, interprets Nature as a self-contained entity, without any transcendent divine background. (2) Next the human mind is not able to really grasp the extremely temporary nature of life and its concerns. Though the intellect can see it, the heart assumes it to be permanent, and man seeks to order his life accordingly.

But those who want to free themselves from this involvement in the cycle of births and deaths, are asked in the first place to cultivate detachment by reflection on the temporary nature of life and on the evils of births and deaths arising from involvement in the cyclic process of *Saṁsāra*. Cultivating detachment from the world, the *Jīva* is asked to develop attachment to the Supreme Being from whom this *Saṁsāra* has sprung. That attachment or *Bhakti* is to end in total self-surrender to Him. It is the conviction of the Gospel of devotion that God alone can lift the *Jīva* from the whirlpool of *Saṁsāra*. It is not by his choice that man finds himself in it. It must be only due to the will of the Supreme Being. And so His will alone can lift one up. The grace of the Supreme Divine comes on those who surrender themselves whole-heartedly to Him, and that grace accomplishes what one cannot do by one's own effort.

2. *Vr.7*: These verses set forth the *Gītā* conception of the personality of man or in fact of all *Jīvas*. The *Jīva* is basically a spirit, an *Aṁśa* or part of the Supreme Being. Immediately the logician raises the question: "How can God, who is also the Infinite Being, have parts? The Absolute must be without parts." Now in terms of Christian thought an answer may be given that He creates it out of nothing. This is only to say that He manifests the *Jīva* and the world by His will. But if differentiating parts from the whole with reference to the Absolute is illegitimate, it is equally so to differentiate between the Absolute and His will. It is only to say, in a different language, that a part of Him manifests as the *Jīva*.

Some Advaitic thinkers would say a part means a reflection of Him in an adjunct (*upādhi*) of body-mind, just like the reflection of the sun in pots of water. Not much is gained by this, because the question will arise wherefrom the *upādhi*, in which He reflects, has come. One has to say that He has manifested Himself as the *Upādhi*, and in that He reflects Himself as the *Jīva*. Now if He can

manifest as the Upādhi and yet remain unaffected, He can as well manifest as the Jīva directly and remain unaffected.

So all these logical ways of putting the relation are self-defeating, because the Infinite and the Absolute Being cannot be put into the strait-jacket of logic without converting Spirit into matter. It is therefore better to take the Gīta statement as it is without going in for the logician's interpretations of it. The Jīva is a part of the Infinite Spirit, just as a spark from a huge conflagration is a part of that fire. It may be a small particle, but it retains in itself all the potentialities of the mighty Divine fire. Thus it forms the basis of Swami Vivekananda's dictum, 'Every soul is potentially divine.'

The question whether the Infinite is not reduced to the finite if it has parts, is mere sophistry. The Supreme Being is not only infinite, but He is also omnipotent. The Omnipotent Spirit can manifest as the many without being affected by such manifestation. To say that this manifestation into the many is only apparent is another sophistry, because the question arises, to whom it appears so. In answer, we have to assume another entity than the Infinite and the Absolute Being, who is the basis of this illusory perception. This will again involve dualism. So to take it exactly as the Gītā states it and accept it as a Divine mystery incapable of being put in logical terms, will be a more straightforward and simple course. We have above all got to remember the Upanishadic dictum, *pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ* etc.,—That is Infinite, this is Infinite. From the Infinite, the Infinite has come forth. When the Infinite is subtracted from the Infinite, the Infinite remains.

3. *Vrs.8-11*: Here is a clear statement of the doctrine of transmigration of the Jīva,—of how the Divine Spark in man on account of identification with parts of the evolutes of Prakṛti gets embodiments. Besides the physical side of personality, the psychic part of it, consisting of the 'Manas or mind and the five Indriyas or senses', is also formed of Prakṛti. This psycho-physical combination is a complex with which the Divine Spark identifies Himself; and thus he gets involved in the transmigratory cycle. But there is no beginning for this involvement. The body-mind is a part of Time's cyclic process of births and deaths, and there is no ultimate beginning for it. But there can be an end to it, a way of liberation

from this beginningless process when, through repeated embodiments the Jīva or embodied being evolves into greater stages of perfection. Through Bhakti and Jñāna, the Ātman realises his spiritual identity apart from the body-mind, and attains liberation. In all these repeated embodiments the Jīva leaves only the old body at death, but carries the mind and the senses, which form the psychic body that conserves and conveys the impressions of the good and the bad Karma potential acquired by the Jīva through actions and contacts. The Jīva's departure from the body, endowed with the Karma-potential, and his enjoyment of it through a new body-mind, maintaining his distinctiveness throughout, are matters of experience to the enlightened ones, but the ignorant are so identified with the body-mind that they take the body-mind as their entire personality.

4. *Vrs.12-15*: The immanence of the Divine in oneself and in all Nature is stated in these verses.

5. *Vrs.16-17*: This passage is very obscure because of the different meanings that have been given to the word Kūṭastha in different interpretations. The meaning given to the word in the Advaitic commentary on the Gītā verse 6.7 is 'unshakable', and 'changeless'. That is the common meaning of the word. But the same commentary interprets it also in a totally different way in Gītā 12.3. Thus Kūṭa is interpreted as 'the false and the evil'. It is identified with the Prakṛti or the Māyā Śakti, which is the cause of falsity, bondage and the evil of involvement in Saṁsāra. The Absolute is what presides over or underlies this principle of evil and falsity. This same derivation is more or less applied in the present context also, and the Akṣara Puruṣa referred to here is interpreted as the Prakṛti or Māyā Śakti. This principle of falsity and evil causes Saṁsāra or the transmigratory cycle. Through other derivations also, the meaning of the word is established as Prakṛti or Māyā Śakti.

In contrast to Māyā Śakti, the cause of multiplicity, there is multiplicity itself as the effect of that Power. This multiplicity, which consists of changeful beings, is the other Puruṣa known as the Kṣara or the collectivity of changeful beings.

The obvious difficulty in accepting this interpretation is the use of the word Puruṣa for both the Kṣara and the Akṣara. The

word *Puruṣa* has been variously interpreted, but it is used only in the sense 'Spirit' as in the *Śāṅkhya* philosophy, the terminologies of which have been accepted in the *Gīta* with more or less the same meanings, only amplifying them from its theistic point of view. In the Advaitic interpretations referred to above, what are spoken of in the text as the two *Puruṣas* (Spirits) become *Prakṛti* in its two aspects of cause and effect—*Māyā śakti*, the cause, and multiplicity, the effect. This complete transformation of the meaning of the word *Puruṣa*, which means 'the Spirit', and never *Prakṛti* and its effects, makes this interpretation unconvincing.

So we have to look also for an alternative interpretation, which retains the meaning of the word *Puruṣa* as Spirit. Of the two Spirits, one, the *Kṣara* or the changeful, consists of all the Spirits or *Jīvas* in bondage who are in varying states of identification with matter. They are undergoing the changes involved in births and deaths in the transmigratory cycle. So they are the *Kṣara* or the changeful. The *Akṣara* or the changeless denotes the *Jīvas* who are liberated from the hold of *Prakṛti* and are therefore established in aloofness and unaffectedness (*Kūṭastha*). Thus this interpretation has the special advantage that it does not resort to any interpretative distortion by converting *Puruṣa* into its opposite *Prakṛti* or *Māyā-śakti*. Superior to these two categories of *Puruṣas* is 'another', the *Puruṣottama*, the Supreme Spirit, who pervades all the worlds and supports everything.

An obvious difficulty in both these interpretations, whether we take the second *Puruṣa* as *Māyā-śakti* or liberated souls, is that they are said to be in 'the world'—*loke*. Now the word can mean 'the transmigratory cycle and the *Jīvas* involved in it', which the second of the category of *Puruṣas* referred to, namely liberated ones, is not. But the term *loke* has also a wider meaning—'the world of Divine manifestation'. *Māyā-śakti* then will be the cause of that Divine manifestation, and the liberated *Jīvas* will be Spirits who prefer to be in the manifested condition as the servants of the Lord. Thus both are in the *loka* in this sense.

Now this interpretation has the advantage of preserving the original meaning of the word *Puruṣa*, the Spirit, by which these three categories are denoted. The question, however, will arise whether this will not involve contradiction of Non-dualism. No doubt it

will not be justifiable from the point of view of pure non-dualism, but non-dualism understood as unity in diversity is quite consistent with it. It may, however, be asked how liberated Jīvas can exist as separate entities in Advaitism, as liberation means becoming one with the Supreme Spirit, even as rivers become one with the ocean. But the Advaita as expounded in the Bhakti tradition of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* maintains that those Jīvas who aspire for salvation as 'obliteration of individuality' attain to oneness in being with the Supreme Lord, but there are many blessed Jīvas that prefer to keep up their individuality so that they may serve the Lord and attain to that Bhajanananda (bliss of service) which is higher than Brahmananda (the bliss of oneness with Him). Such Spirits are free from the bondage of Nature even as the Lord Himself. They remain as the servants of God in His creative and redemptive activity. This is a theory developed in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

A third meaning is given overlooking the Sāṃkhyan dichotomy of Puruṣa and Prakṛti in the light of a sanction from the Gīta itself. In Gīta 7.4-5, the Lord speaks of his two Prakṛtis—the *Aparā* (lower) and the *Parā* (higher), the changing world of matter being the lower, and the changeless Jīva, the higher. Here we get a sanction for calling Jīva itself as Prakṛti, thus breaking the Sāṃkhyan dichotomy between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. In the light of this clarification, the *Kṣara Puruṣa* and *Akṣara (Kūṭastha) Puruṣa* are the two Prakṛtis of the Lord taught in Gīta 7.4-5. The *Kṣara-puruṣa* is the embodied Jīva in identification with the body or the conventional superficial man as the body-mind. The Puruṣa who is Akṣara (imperishable) and Kūṭastha (firm and aloof), is the Jīva in his real or non-phenomenal nature. This identification will make the two terms Kṣara and Kūṭastha-Akṣara synonymous with the *Aparā-prakṛti* or the material power, and with the Jīva or the spiritual emanation of the Lord, respectively. A meaning like this is plausible, but not perhaps in any way more satisfactory than the other two.

6. Vr.20: The special importance of this Chapter, even in a scripture profound throughout like the Gītā, is emphasised by calling it *iti guhyatamaṁ idaṁ śāstram*—this spiritual doctrine, the most profound, *guhyatamaṁ*, of all in the sacred lore. The Gītā is called a *Śāstra*—a book on spiritual truth. In the eighteen chapters of the Gītā-Śāstra this particular chapter is specially called the *Śāstra*, because it epitomises the teachings of the whole Gītā,—nay,

of the whole Vedānta. A careful study of it will show that it expounds all the fundamental doctrines of the Vedānta—the doctrine of Samsāra and man's involvement in it, the doctrine of Karma and transmigration, the way to overcome Samsāra, the nature of the Jīva and how it transmigrates, the doctrine of Išvara, the transcendence of the Divine, the doctrine of renunciation of worldly values, and the ways of Bhakti and Jñāna as an integrated spiritual discipline. It is therefore the most important chapter of the Gīta, and a careful study of it will put one in touch with the whole theme of the Vedānta.

Chapter XVI

देवासुरसंपद्विभागयोगः

THE DIVINE AND THE DEMONIAK TYPES

SUMMARY

The Divine and the Diabolic types: (1-18) The Lord said: In creation there are two character types—the Āsuric and the Daivic. The former is hostile to all spiritual values, while the latter is fully receptive to them. The Āsuric type makes no distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous, the pure and the impure, truth and untruth. In their world view there is no place for God, the abiding spiritual background for this world of change. Pursuit of lust and lucre is their supreme quest in life, and success in this, the only criterion of respectability. "Who is there equal to Me?" is their watch-word; and to amass wealth, to destroy their enemies, to satisfy their lusts, to acquire name and fame by any means, fair or foul, are their sole objects in life. With such an outlook they exploit and oppress all their fellow beings, as also the Lord who is immanent in all. Such persons go down in the spiritual scale.

As distinguished from this is the divine or the spiritual type. They are pure, fearless, full of spiritual aspiration, self-controlled, generous, loving, truthful, patient, benevolent and free from pride and vanity.

The Gateway to Hell: (19-24) Those who want to rise spiritually should follow these divine ideals, and shun the Āsuric traits. Sexuality, anger and greed are the factors that make man more and more Āsuric. They are the three gate-ways to hell. Let all right-thinking men avoid them. Sexuality, anger and greed are

natural to the unregenerate man. Regulating and overcoming them is morality, the gate-way to spirituality. For this, man has to depend on the guidance of a Śāstra, a scripture. For, left to his own unguided intelligence, his tendency will be only to yield to the evil in him and not to master it. So man requires an external authority, prescribing what to do and what not to do. That authority is called a scripture, a text believed to have the sanction of God. Unless guided by an objective authority to whom sanctity is attached, man in his natural state will degenerate into a slave of passions.

While many other chapters of the Gītā are of great metaphysical and devotional significance and deserve close study, this particular chapter specially calls for the attention of every man. The Āsūric tendency analysed and criticised in it, has a home in the hearts of most people, and to be aware of this fact is the first step to master it and lay the foundation for the edifice of spiritual life. The reader will therefore do well to memorize this chapter and reflect on its implications.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १ ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

Abhayam sattva-saṁśuddhir jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ /
dānam damaś ca yajñaś ca svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam ॥१॥

Abhayam : Fearlessness sattva-saṁśuddhiḥ : purity of the heart
jñānayoga-vyavasthitiḥ : steadfastness in knowledge and devotion
dānam : charity, benevolence damaś : control of the senses : ca and
yajñaś : worship ca : and svādhyāyaś : study of scriptures tapaś :
austerity ārjavam : uprightness.

The Blessed Lord said:

1. Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and devotion, benevolence, control of the senses, worship, study of scriptures, austerity, uprightness;

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ 2 ॥

Ahimsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam |
dayā bhūteṣu aloluptvaṁ mārdaṁ hrīr acāpalam //2//

Ahimsā : Non-violence *satyam* : truthfulness *akrodhaḥ* : freedom from anger *tyāgaḥ* : renunciation *śāntiḥ* : tranquillity *apaiśunam* : aversion to slander *bhūteṣu dayā* : compassion to living beings *aloluptvam* : freedom from sensuality *mārdavam* : gentleness *hrīḥ* : modesty *acāpalam* : steadiness.

2. Non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, aversion to slander, compassion to living beings, freedom from sensuality, gentleness, modesty, steadfastness;

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ 3 ॥

Tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho n'ātimānitā |
bhavanti sampadam daivīm abhijātasya Bhārata //3//

Bhārata : O scion of the Bharata clan! *Tejaḥ* : vigour *kṣamā* : patience *dhṛtiḥ* : fortitude *śaucam* : purity *adrohaḥ* : harmlessness *nātimānitā* : freedom from vanity *daivīm* : divine *sampadam* : heritage *abhijātasya* : born to *bhavanti* : belong.

3. Vigour, patience, fortitude, purity, harmlessness, freedom from vanity—all these, O scion of the Bharatas, are present in those born to a divine heritage.

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पाश्व्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम् ॥ 4 ॥

Daṁbho darpo'bhimānaś ca krodhaḥ pāruṣyam eva ca |
ajñānam c'abhijātasya Pārtha sampadam āsurīm //4//

Pārtha : O son of *Pṛthā*! *daṁbhaḥ* : pretentiousness *darpaḥ* : arrogance *abhimānaḥ* : overweening pride *ca* : and *krodhaḥ* : wrath *pāruṣyam* : rudeness *eva ca* : as also *ajñānam* : insensitivity to spiritual values *āsurīm saṁpadam* : demoniac heritage *abhijātasya* : of one born to.

4. O son of *Pṛthā*! Pretentiousness, arrogance, overweening pride, wrath, rudeness, as also insensitivity to spiritual values—all these are found in those born to a demoniac heritage.

दैवी सम्पद्धिमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।

मा शुचः सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥ 5 ॥

Daivī saṁpad vimokṣāya nibandhāy'āsurī matā /

mā śucaḥ saṁpadam daivīm abhijāto'si Pāṇḍava //5//

Daivī saṁpat : The divine heritage *vimokṣāya* : for liberation, *āsurī* : demoniac heritage *nibandhāya* : for bondage *matā* : deemed. *Pāṇḍava* : O son of *Pāṇḍu*! *daivīm saṁpadam* : to a divine heritage *abhijātaḥ asi* : you are born to, *mā śucaḥ* : do not grieve.

5. It is deemed that the divine heritage leads to liberation and the demoniac to bondage. Grieve not, O son of *Pāṇḍu*! You are born to a divine heritage.

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च ।

दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥ 6 ॥

Dvau bhūta-sargau loka'smin daiva āsura eva ca /

daivo vistaraśaḥ prokta āsuram Pārtha me śṛṇu //6//

Asmin loka : In this world *daivaḥ* : Divine *āsuraḥ* : demoniac *eva* : thiswise *ca* : and *bhūtasargau* : types of creation *dvau* : are two; *daivaḥ* : the divine *vistaraśaḥ* : in detail *proktaḥ* : has been enumerated. *āsuram* : the demoniac *me* : from Me *śṛṇu* : hear.

6. In this world there are two types of creation, the divine and the demoniac. The divine heritage has already been described. Now hear from Me what constitutes the demoniac heritage, O son of Pṛthā.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥ 7 ॥

Pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca janā na vidur āsurāḥ |
na śaucam nā'pi c'ācāro na satyam teṣu vidyate ||7||

Āsurāḥ janāḥ : The demoniac type *pravṛttiṁ* : what should be done
nivṛttiṁ ca : and what should not be done *na viduḥ* : do not know;
teṣu : in them *śaucam na vidyate* : there is no purity, *ācāram ca nā* :
no good conduct too, *satyam api na* : truth also has no place.

7. Men of demoniac nature know not what should be done and what should be avoided. Neither purity, nor good conduct, nor truthfulness is found in them.

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते अगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसम्भूतं किमन्यत्कामहितुकम् ॥ 8 ॥

Asatyam apratiṣṭham te jagad āhur anīśvaram |
aparaspara-sambhūtam kim anyat kāma-haitukam ||8||

Te : They (say) *jagat* : the universe *asatyam* : is without truth,
apratīṣṭham : is without a support, *anīśvaram* : is without a God,
aparaspara-sambhūtam : is born of sexual union, *kāmahaitukam* :
is having lust as its cause; *kim anyat āhuḥ* : what else can be said.

8. According to them nothing is ultimately real in this world. It is Godless and without any moral basis. Being born of sex union, what else but lust can be said to be its cause?

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणिः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥ ९ ॥

Etām dr̥ṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭ'ātmāno' lpa-buddhayaḥ /
prabhavanty ugra-karmāṇaḥ kṣayaāya jagato'hitāḥ //9//

Etām : This *dr̥ṣṭim* : outlook *avaṣṭabhya* : adopting, *naṣṭ'ātmānaḥ* : these lost souls *alpabuddhayaḥ* : men of little understanding *ugrakarmāṇaḥ* : given to cruel deeds *ahitāḥ* : opposed to general well-being *jagataḥ* : of the world *kṣayaāya* : for destruction *prabhavanti* are born.

9. Holding such views, these lost souls—these men of little understanding—given, as they are, to cruel deeds opposed to general well-being, appear as agents for the destruction of the world.

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।
मोहाद्ग्रहीत्वाऽसद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिव्रताः ॥ १० ॥

Kāmam āśritya duṣpūram dambha-māna-mad'ānvitāḥ /
mohād gr̥hītvā'sad-grāhān pravartante'suci-vratāḥ //10//

Duṣpūram : Insatiable *kāmam* : lust *āśritya* : steeped in *dambha-māna-mad'ānvitāḥ* : full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance *aśucivratāḥ* : given to corrupt and impure ways of life *mohāt* : due to delusion *asad-grāhān* : false values *gr̥hītvā* : entertaining *pravartante* : they work.

10. Steeped in insatiable lust, motivated by hypocrisy, vanity, arrogance and avarice, given to corrupt and impure ways of life, they work in pursuit of false values entertained through delusion.

चिन्तामपरिमेषां च प्रलयास्तामुपाश्रिताः ।
काशोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥ ११ ॥

Cintām aparimeyām ca pralay'antām upāśritāḥ /
kām'opabhoga-paramā etāvad iti niścitāḥ //11//

Aparimeyām : Without end, numerous *pralayāntām* : ending only with death, life-long *cintām* : cares *upāśritya* : obsessed with, *kāmopabhoga-paramāḥ* : who have indulgence in sex as their highest end in life, *etāvad* : this is all *iti* : thus *niścītāḥ* : convinced.

11. Obsessed with numerous cares all through life, looking on sex indulgence as the highest aim, convinced that there is no higher purpose in life than this,

आशायाशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।

ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥ 12 ॥

Āśā-pāśa-śatair baddhāḥ kāma-krodha-parāyaṇāḥ /
ihante kāma-bhog'ārtham anyāyen'ārtha-sañcayān //12//

Āśā-pāśa-śatair-baddhāḥ : Bound with a hundred cords of hopes and expectations *kāma-krodha-parāyaṇāḥ* : enslaved by lust and anger *kāma-bhog'ārtham* : for the fulfilment of their sensuous desires *anyāyena* : in improper ways *artha-sañcayān* : accumulation of wealth *ihante* : they strive for.

12. Bound with a hundred cords of hopes and expectations, and enslaved by lust and anger, they strive to accumulate wealth in improper ways for the fulfilment of their sensuous desires.

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् ।

इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥ 13 ॥

Idam adya mayā labdham imam prāpsyē manoratham /
idam asti idam api me bhaviṣyati punar dhanam //13//

Idam : This *adya* : today *mayā* : by me *labdham* : has been gained, *imam* : that *manoratham* : desire *prāpsyē* : I shall attain, *idam asti* : I have this much wealth now, *idam* : this *dhanam api* : wealth too *me* : mine *punāḥ* : again, hereafter *bhaviṣyati* : will become.

13. "Today I have gained this object, tomorrow I shall gain that object of desire too; I have this much wealth now, much more will be mine hereafter;

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।
ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी ॥ 14 ॥

Asau mayā hataḥ śātrur haniṣye ca'parān api /
īśvaro'ham aham bhogī siddho'ham balavān sukhī //14//

Asau : This *śātruh* : enemy, *mayā* : by Me *hataḥ* : has been slain, *aparān* : others *api* : also *haniṣye ca* : I will destroy; *aham īśvaraḥ* : I am the master; *aham* : I am *bhogī* : the enjoyer (of everything); *aham siddhaḥ* : I am the successful man, *balavān* : the powerful man, *sukhī* : the happy man.

14. "This enemy has been slain, the others too I will soon destroy; I am the master; everything is for my enjoyment; I am the successful man, the powerful man, the happy man;

आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥ 15 ॥

Āḍhyo'bhijanavān asmi ko'nyo'sti sadṛśo mayā /
yakṣye dāsyāmi modīṣya ity ajñāna-vimohitāḥ //15//

Āḍhyaḥ : Wealthy *abhijanavān* : high-born *asmi* : I am; *mayā sadṛśaḥ* : equal to me *anyaḥ* : another *kaḥ* : who *asti* : is there; *yakṣye* : I shall sacrifice, *dāsyāmi* : will do charity, *modīṣye* : will rejoice, *iti* : thus *ajñānavimohitāḥ* : deluded by ignorance.

15. "I am wealthy and high-born; who is there like unto me? I will perform sacrifices, I will make charity, and I will rejoice"—deluded thus by ignorance;

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ 16 ॥

Aneka-citta-vibhrāntā moha-jāla-samāvṛtāḥ /
prasaktāḥ kāma-bhogeṣu patanti narake'sucau //16//

Aneka-citta-vibhrāntāḥ : Gripped by numerous bewildering thoughts
mohajāla samāvṛtāḥ : entangled in the meshes of delusion
kāma-bhogeṣu prasaktāḥ : ever given to sex-indulgences *aśucau*
narake : into loathsome hell *patanti* : fall.

16. Gripped by numerous bewildering thoughts, entangled in the meshes of delusion, and ever given to sex indulgences, they are degraded into states that are loathsome and full of suffering.

आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।

यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ 17 ॥

Ātma-sambhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhana-māna-mad'ānvitāḥ |
yajante nāma-yajñais te dambhen'avidhipūrvakam //17//

Ātmasambhāvitāḥ : Vain-glorious *stabdhāḥ* ; obstinate *dhana-māna-mad'ānvitāḥ* : intoxicated with the pride of wealth *dambhena* : for mere show *avidhi-pūrvakam* : in disregard of all commandments *nāma-yajñaiḥ* : by nominal *Yajñas yajante* : worship.

17. Vain-glorious, stubborn and intoxicated with the pride of wealth, they perform for mere show *Yajñas* that are so in name only, being done without the observance of the commandments of the scriptures.

अहंकारं बलं दपं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।

मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥ 18 ॥

Ahaṁkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ |
mām ātma-para-deheṣu pradviṣanto'bhyaśūyakāḥ //18//

Ahaṁkāraṁ : Self-conceit *balaṁ* : proneness to physical violence *darpaṁ* : arrogance *kāmaṁ* : lust *krodhaṁ* : anger *ca* : and *saṁśritāḥ* : possessed of, *abhyasūyakāḥ* : traducers of virtue *ātmaparadeheṣu* : residing in themselves and in others *mām* : Me *pradviṣantaḥ (bhavanti)* : violate.

18. Dominated by self-conceit, prone to the use of force, arrogant, lustful and choleric, these traducers of virtue violate Me, dwelling in them and also in others.

तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।
क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥ 19 ॥

Tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṁsāreṣu nar'ādhamān |
kṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān āsurīṣveva yoniṣu //19//

Dviṣataḥ : Oppressive *krūrān* : cruel *aśubhān* : sinful *narādhamān* : vicious men *tān* : these *saṁsāreṣu* : in the transmigratory cycle *āsurīṣu yoniṣu* : in demoniac wombs *eva* : only *aham* : I *ajasram* : always *kṣipāmi* : hurl.

19. These vicious men, oppressive, cruel and sinful as they are,—are always hurled down by Me into demoniac wombs in life after life, in the transmigratory cycle.

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥ 20 ॥

Āsurīm yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani |
mām aprāpy'aiva Kaunteya tato yānty adhamām gatim //20//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī *mūḍhā* : these senseless men *janmani janmani* : in life after life *āsurīm yonim* : demoniac wombs *āpannā* : falling into *mām* : Me *aprāpya eva* : not attaining *tataḥ* : than that *adhamām* : lower *gatim* : state *yānti* : attain.

20. O son of Kuntī! Falling into demoniac wombs, in life after life, they go to still lower states of degradation, without attaining Me.

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ 21 ॥

Tri-vidham narakasy'edam dvāram nāśanam ātmanah |
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas-tasmād etat trayam tyajet ||21||

Kāmaḥ : Sexuality *krodhaḥ* : anger *tathā* : and *lobhaḥ* : greed *idam* : this *trividham* : triad *ātmanah* : of the spiritual self in man *nāśanam* : destructive; *narakasya* : of the hell *dvāram* : gateway; *tasmād* : therefore *etat* : this *trayam* : triad *tyajet* : should give up.

21. Lust, anger and greed— this triad leads to the destruction of man's spiritual nature. They form the gateway to hell; they should be abandoned.²

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।

आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ 22 ॥

Etair vimuktaḥ Kaunteya tamo-dvārais-tribhir naraḥ |
ācaraty ātmanah śreyas-tato yāti parāṁ gatim ||22||

Kaunteya : O Arjuna! *tamodvāraiḥ* : by the gateway to hell *etair* : *tribhiḥ* : from these three *vimuktaḥ* : free, *naraḥ* : man *ātmanah* : his own *śreyaḥ* : good *ācarati* : works out; *tataḥ* : then *parāṁ gatim* : the highest goal *yāti* : reaches.

22. If a man is free from these three, the gateways to hell, he can work out his own good and reach the highest goal.

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ 23 ॥

Yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsrjya vartate kāma-kārataḥ |
na sa siddhim avāpnōti na sukham na parāṁ gatim ||23||

Yah : Who *śāstravidhim* : commandment of scriptures *utsṛjya* : abandoning *kāmakārataḥ vartate* : lives as his desires prompt him *saḥ* : he *siddhim* : spiritual perfection *na avāpnoti* : does not attain, *na sukhām* : nor worldly happiness *na parāṁ gatim* : nor liberation.

23. He who abandons the commandments of the scriptures and lives as his desires prompt him, he attains neither spiritual perfection, nor worldly happiness, nor liberation.³

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्यकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ 24 ॥

Tasmāc chāstraṁ pramāṇam te kāryākārya-vyavasthitau / jñātvā 'śāstra-vidhān'oktam karma kartum ih' ārhasi //24//

Tasmāt : Therefore *kāryākārya-vyavasthitau* : in determining what should be done and what not *te* : to you *śāstraṁ pramāṇam* : let the scriptures be the norm; *śāstra-vidhānoktam* : the injunction of the scriptures *jñātvā* : knowing *karma kartum arhasi* : you should perform work.

24. Therefore let the scriptures be your norm in determining what should be done and what not. Understand the injunction of the scriptures first and then set yourself to work.

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे दैवासुरसंपद्विभागयोगो
नाम षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥ 16 ॥

NOTES

1. *Vrs.6-20*: In these verses and those preceeding them, a theory of two types of souls with inherently opposite tendencies seems to be propounded. Vivid description of both these types is given in verses 1 to 5 and 7 to 20. One type called *Daivī* or divine, is Godward-looking and is receptive to ideas leading to liberation from the clutches of *Prakṛti*. The other type called

Āsuri is just the opposite. Those who are included in it are steeped in worldliness, and are anti-God and anti-spiritual. According to the theory propounded here, the former gradually evolve their higher faculties and attain liberation from *Pṛakṛti*, while the latter become eternally involved in *Samsāra*. It is also said in verse 20 that they are repeatedly born in 'devilish wombs' (*āsurīm yonīm*) and without taking the Godward path, attain to *adhamām gatim*—'the most heinous destiny'.

On the basis of such texts, some schools of Vedānta like those of Sri Madhva and Sri Vallabha have propounded the theory of *tāratamya* or inherent qualitative differences in *Jīvas*, some being made for salvation and others for degradation. There is no eternal damnation in Hinduism, but this confinement to '*adhamām gatim*' or continued embodiments among the lowest creatures like insects, fish, snakes etc., corresponds to it as the wages for confirmed evil doers.

There is a theoretical possibility of salvation even for such degraded souls when Divine grace descends on them through Incarnations and through very holy saints. Since *Samsāra* or the transmigratory cycle is a never-ending process, perpetual involvement in it is the attaining to that most heinous destiny—*yānt-yadhamām gatim*.

2. *Vrs.21-22*: The cause of all degeneration in the individual and society is here traced to the three factors, sexuality, anger and greed, which are described as factors leading to the destruction of man's spiritual nature—*dvāram nāśanam ātmanah*. Animals have lust, but it is limited by Nature's call. They have also greed in the sense of urge to eat out of hunger, but when their hunger is satisfied, they are not concerned with accumulation like man, and they have therefore nothing like human greed. Animals have anger, but it is limited in its scope, and is roused only when they are hungry or face to face with danger. It is not that all-consuming and vindictive passion as in man.

The nature of man is such that he is given unrestricted scope to indulge in these urges until ruin seizes him. He is, however, given also an in-built capacity to control, regulate, and ultimately overcome these passions. If he does not exercise this capacity and fails to control the lower nature in him, he will lose his humanity,

and will be consigned to birth in low orders like animals, insects, snakes etc., (*āsurīm-yonim*), as warned in the earlier passages.

The one point to be understood from this is that at the human level, growth or evolution is through control of instincts and not by submission to them. The latter is the path to degradation and spiritual death through the growth of *Āsurīsampat* (demoniac nature), while the former is the way to rise in the spiritual scale through the acquisition of *Dairīsampat* (godly nature).

It has to be pointed out, that though there is not much of metaphysical and theological doctrines in this chapter, it is however of great importance in the study of the Gītā from a spiritual point of view. A daily study of it will remind one of the importance of self-control for avoiding absolute degradation.

3. *Vrs.23-24*: Scripture is held forth before man as the most important help in providing the criteria by which one could determine what should be done and what should not be done. With its help, the growth of demoniac qualities is arrested, and the development of divine qualities helped.

How are we to determine a moral act? The branch of philosophy called ethics has attempted to find out a purely rational basis for morality. The rational criteria offered are often subjective. It is said that conscience must be the criterion. But the conscience of people is often pliable by self-interest and self-love, and may become very unreliable in judging moral worth. If a person has a pure and refined mind, conscience may be reliable to a great extent, as an improper act will be instinctively repugnant to such minds. But such persons are very few, and the majority of men have only a time-serving conscience.

Another criterion given is the dictum to do unto others what you like to be done unto yourself. It means to have a sense of 'sameness' between oneself and others, and regulate one's behaviour towards others by this sense. In simple language it means to be unselfish.

Most men are not inward looking enough to be benefited by such considerations. They want an objective criterion which will be precise and fit to be practised without much subjective reflection. The Śāstra or the scripture is one of them. Another is the conduct of wise men.

Even these are not without drawbacks. The conduct of great men has varied. Some of the greatest personages classed as incarnations like Sri Krishna have behaved in a way contrary to accepted codes, and so men are warned that as their behaviour was regulated by considerations of their world-saving mission, men should follow not their actions, but their instructions, and their actions only to the extent they tally with their teachings. Still the conduct of leading men can, in a way, be a guidance to the common man.

The next and the most important criterion is the Śāstra, or the scripture. Any text in Sanskrit will not be a scripture. There are many texts which are accepted by some as scriptures, but the texts vary in their teachings and prescribe practices which are not compatible with the needs of varying times. Such is the case with many of the Smṛtis of the Hindus. Even practices like untouchability and unapproachability have been advocated by several Smṛtis. The observance of caste rules, which many Smṛtis prescribe, will not be compatible with the non-feudal and democratic ideologies of modern times. In them there are of course many great moral teachings of universal interest. If it is said that the Vedas are to be followed, there also there are many difficulties. Few can understand them today and interpretations, which are conflicting, have to be depended upon. They are often too complex and remote for ordinary man to understand and follow.

There are many great moral dicta in these varied scriptures; these can be selected and followed. Besides, the Mahabharata has laid down fourteen virtues as Samānya Dharma—duties common to all*. These are: Forbearance, truthfulness, self-restraint, cleanliness, charity, control of the senses, non-violence, service of the elders, pilgrimages, compassion, keeping vows, freedom from avarice, worship of the deities, and absence of jealousy. These are sufficiently broad in scope, and one following them, will certainly rise very high in the moral scale.

There are other religions like Christianity and Islam which too have their scriptures. Since Christianity is a highly organised

**Kṣamā satyaṁ damaḥ śaucaṁ dānam indriyaśamyaḥ
ahiṁsā guruśrūṣā tīrthānusaraṇaṁ dayā;
ātmavratam alobhitvaṁ devatānāṁ ca pūjanaṁ
anabhyasūyā ca tathā dharmāḥ sāmānya ucyate.*

religion, there is some sort of uniformity of conduct laid down by the Churches. Even such rules of conduct are becoming incompatible with changing times and their needs, and are therefore obeyed more in their breach than in their observance. Islam swears by the book, and Islamic fundamentalism turns men into two groups, the believers and the non-believers, and makes invidious distinction in the behaviour of one towards his fellow religionists and non-believers. Besides, many of the practices sanctioned by Islamic fundamentalism will go counter to modern trends.

So from a practical point of view, a scripture can lay down only the main moral principles and leave the details to be worked out according to time and place. In this respect the Gītā is a perfect scripture and its universal moral doctrine laid down in the verses 21-22 of this chapter, is unexceptionable. It states: "Sexuality, anger and greed lead to the destruction of man's spiritual nature. They form the gateways to hell. They should be abandoned. If a man is free from these three, the gateways to hell, he can work out his own good and reach the highest goal." Gītā prescribes self-control as the means to achieve this. It is thus the perfect universal Śāstra for all mankind, whatever might be the religion one follows.

In the application of these principles to life, one can form a code of conduct for oneself in their light, and keep that as a norm, an objective criterion for regulating one's life. Thus pure subjectiveness involved in the acceptance of conscience can be avoided. An objective criterion of some kind is very necessary for man. That is the simple meaning of the dictum, 'Let the Śāstra be your guidance.'

The whole of the Gītā itself is a proof of the need for an objective criterion for regulating one's conduct. Arjuna was in confusion as to what his duty was—to fight or not to fight in that war with momentous consequences. He could not come to a decision. Even the ordinarily accepted code of conduct for Kṣatriyas of those days, did not satisfy him. It required a Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of Gurus, to convince him. A real Guru is thus the best objective authority for giving a code of conduct. But in life such Gurus are seldom to be had. So we have to turn to a scripture like the Gītā and to the Lord for enlightening us on what is good and what is bad in a complex situation.

Chapter XVII

श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगः

THE THREE DIVISIONS OF FAITH

SUMMARY

Faith as rooted in the Guṇas : (1-22) The Lord now speaks of Śraddhā (Faith), the inner intuition and natural receptivity of the mind to ideals, which ultimately settles man's preference for the scripture. 'Man is verily constituted of his Faith, and he is what his Faith is.' Man's faith is determined by the dominance of one or the other of the three qualities of Nature—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. His preference in respect of objects of worship food, activities etc., will depend upon his Śraddhā. Whatever is done without vanity, but is motivated by the good of others and has the grace of God in mind, is Sāttvika. Whatever is sought or done with desire, vanity, and for self-glorification, is Rājasa. And whatever is done indifferently, with evil motives, thoughtlessly, and in a grumbling spirit is Tāmasa. Such conduct is futile in respect of man's higher evolution.

Om, Tat, Sat (23-28): Om, Tat, Sat are the holy syllables indicating the sacrificial mentality. Whatever man does as an offering unto God with the utterance of these syllables, promotes his spiritual evolution. All sacrificial rites, all austerity practised, all charity done are of no spiritual efficacy if they are not supported by Faith.

अर्जुन उवाच

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

*Ye śāstra-vidhim utsrjya yajante śraddhayā'nvitāḥ /
teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā Kṛṣṇa sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ* //1//

Kṛṣṇa : O *Kṛṣṇa*! *ye* : who *śāstravidhim* : injunction of the scriptures *utsrjya* ; without observing *śraddhayā'nvitāḥ* : with Faith *yajante* : offer sacrifices, perform worship, *teṣāṁ* : of these *niṣṭhā* : faith *tu* : indeed *kā* : what (*kim*) *sattvam āho* : is it to be considered as a product of Sattva, *rajaḥ* : *ṛ* *Rajas*, *tamaḥ* : or of Tamas.

Arjuna said:

1. There are persons who offer worship full of Faith, but without observing scriptural injunctions while doing so—of what nature is their Faith? Is it born of Sattva, Rajas or Tamas?¹

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावाज्जा ।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥ 2 ॥

Sri Bhagavān uvāca:

*Tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā dehināṁ sā svabhāva-jā /
sāttviki rājasi c'āiva tāmasi c'eti tāṁ śṛṇu* //2//

Dehinām : Of embodied souls *svabhāvajā* : rooted in their nature *sā śraddhā* : that Faith *sāttviki* : of Sattva, *Rājasi* : of Rajas, *ca* : and *tāmasi* : of Tamas *iti* : thus *trividhā eva bhavati* : occurs in these three ways *tām* : It *śṛṇu* : do listen.

The Blessed Lord said:

2. The Faith of embodied beings, which is rooted in their natural disposition (derived from the impressions of past births), is of three kinds—those of the nature of Sattva, of Rajas and of Tamas.² Please listen.

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥ 3 ॥

Sattv'ānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati Bhārata ।

śraddhāmayo'yam puruṣo yo yac-chraddhāḥ sa eva saḥ ॥3॥

Bhārata : O scion of the Bharata race! *sarvasya* : of all *śraddhā* : Faith *sattvānurūpā* : is in accordance with the natural disposition; *ayam* : this *puruṣaḥ* : man *śraddhāmayaḥ* : is made of his Faith; *yaḥ* : he *yac-chraddhāḥ* : what happens to be his Faith *saḥ* : he *eva* : indeed *saḥ* : is that.

3. O scion of the Bharata race! The Faith of everyone is according to his natural disposition (derived from past impressions). Man is constituted of his Faith. What his Faith is, that verily he is.

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।

प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥ 4 ॥

Yajante sāttvikā devān yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ ।

pretān bhūta-gaṇāṁś c'ānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ ॥4॥

Sāttvikāḥ : Those endowed with Sattva *devān* : Devas *yajante* : worship *rājasāḥ* : those endowed with Rajas *Yakṣarakṣāṁsi* : Yakṣas (demi-gods) and Rākṣasas (demons); *ānye* : others *tāmasāḥ janāḥ* : who are possessed of Tamas *pretān* : spirits of the dead *bhūtagaṇān* : elementals *ca* : and *yajante* : worship.

4. Those endowed with the quality of Sattva worship the Devas; those with Rajas, the Yakṣas and the Rākṣasas; and those with Tamas, the spirits of the dead and the elementals.³

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं कृष्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।

दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः ॥ 5 ॥

कर्षयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतप्राममचेतसः ।

मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्वत्प्रासुरनिश्चयान् ॥ 6 ॥

Aśāstra-vihitaṁ ghoram tapyante ye tapo janāḥ /
dam̐bhāhaṁkāra- saṁyuktāḥ kāma-rāga-balānvitāḥ //5//

karṣayantaḥ śarīra-sthaṁ bhūta-grāmam acetasaḥ /
mām c'aivāntaḥ-śarīra-sthaṁ tān viddhy āsura-niścayān //6//

Ye janāḥ : Those men who *dam̐bhā-haṁkāra-saṁyuktāḥ* : who are vain and conceited *kāma-rāga-balānvitāḥ* : impelled by the force of their inordinate desires and attachments *acetasaḥ* : who are senseless *śarīra-sthaṁ bhūtagrāmam* : the assemblage of elements that constitute the body *antaḥ-śarīra-sthaṁ mām* : Me residing in the body *ca* : and *eva* : also *karṣayantaḥ* : torture, *aśāstra-vihitam* : contrary to scriptural injunction *ghoram* : terrible *tapāḥ* : mortification *tapyante* : perform, *tān* : them *āsura-niścayān* : demoniac in their resolve *viddhi* : know.

5-6. Vain, conceited and moved by powerful passions and attachments, they perform various terrible mortifications contrary to scriptural injunctions. Thus do these senseless men torture their own bodies and Me dwelling in them. Know such persons to be of demoniac resolve.

आहारस्तपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।

यजस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥ 7 ॥

Āhāraśtṛpī sarvasya tri-vidho bhavati priyaḥ /
yajñas tapas tathā dānam teṣāṁ bhedaṁ imaṁ śṛṇu //7//

Sarvasya tu : Of all the three types *priyaḥ* : dear *āhāraḥ* : food *api* : even *trividhaḥ bhavati* : is of three kinds; *tathā* : in the same way *yajñas* : worship *tapas* : austerity *dānam* : charity *teṣāṁ* : of them; *imaṁ bhedaṁ* : this distinction *śṛṇu* : hear.

7. Even the food dear to these three types is of three different kinds. The same is the case with worship, austerity and charity. Hear from Me about this distinction regarding them.⁴

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ 8 ॥

Āyuh-sattva-bal'ārogya-sukha-prīti-vivardhanāḥ ।

rasyāḥ snigdḥāḥ sthirā hṛdyā āhārāḥ sāttvika-priyāḥ //8//

Āyuh-sattva-bal'ārogya-sukha-prīti-vivardhanāḥ : Those that promote longevity, vitality, energy, health, happiness and cheerfulness
rasyāḥ : juicy *snigdḥāḥ* : soft *sthirāḥ* : nourishing *hṛdyāḥ* : agreeable
āhārāḥ : foods *sāttvikapriyāḥ* : are liked by people who are Sāttvika by nature.

8. Persons who are Sāttvika by nature like foods that promote longevity, vitality, energy, health, happiness and cheerfulness, as also those that are juicy, soft, nourishing and agreeable.

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजसस्वेष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ 9 ॥

Kaṭv-amla-lavaṇ'ātyuṣṇa-tīkṣṇa-rūkṣa-vidāhinaḥ ।

āhārā rājasasy'eṣṭā duḥkha-śokā'maya-pradāḥ //9//

Kaṭv-amla-lavaṇ'ātyuṣṇa-tīkṣṇa-rūkṣa-vidāhinaḥ : Foods that are bitter, sour, salty, excessively heating, pungent, burning and thirst-producing *duḥkha-śokā'mayapradāḥ* : causing uneasiness, depression and disease *āhārāḥ* : foods *rājasasya* : of persons who are Rājasa by nature *iṣṭāḥ* : are liked.

9. Persons who are Rājasa by nature like foods that are bitter, sour, salty, excessively heating, pungent, burning and thirst-producing as also what bring on uneasiness, depression and disease.

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।

उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ 10 ॥

*Yātāyāmam gatarasam pūti paryuṣitam ca yat /
ucchiṣṭam api cā'medhyam bhojanam tāmasa-priyam //10//*

Yātāyāmam : Prepared before a Yāma (three hours), stale *gatarasam* : tasteless *pūti* : putrid *paryuṣitam* : decayed *ca* : and *ucchiṣṭam* : leavings of what others have eaten *api* : also *amedhyam* : unclean *ca* : and *yat* : which *bhojanam* : food *tāmasa-priyam* : dear to men of Tamas.

10. Persons who are Tāmasa by nature like foods that are stale, tasteless, putrid, decayed and unclean, and constitute the leavings of others.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥ 11 ॥

*Aphal'ākāṅkṣibhir yajño vidhi-drṣṭo ya ijjate /
yaṣṭavyam ev'eti manaḥ samādhāya sa sāttvikaḥ //11//*

Yaṣṭavyam eva : What ought to be done as duty *iti* : thus *manaḥ* : mind *samādhāya* : having fixed *vidhi-drṣṭaḥ* : as ordained by the scriptures *yaj* : which *yajñāḥ* : sacrifice, worship *aphal'ākāṅkṣibhiḥ* : by those who have no desire for fruits *ijjate* : is offered, *saḥ* : that *sāttvikaḥ* : is of the nature of Sattva.

11. That worship is of the nature of Sattva which is in accordance with scriptural injunctions, and which is performed by one not with an eye for its fruits but merely out of the feeling that it is one's duty to perform it.

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।

इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ 12 ॥

*Abhisandhāya tu phalam dambh'ārtham api c'aiva yat /
ijjate bharata-śreṣṭha taṁ yajñaṁ viddhi rājasam //12//*

Bharata-śreṣṭha : O scion of the Bharata race! *phalam* ; result *abhisamdhāya* : having in mind *tu* : indeed *dam̐bhārtham* : for vain display *api* : also *ca* : and *eva* : even *yat* : what *ijyate* : is offered (as worship), *tam* : that *yajñam* : sacrifice, worship, *rājasam* : of the nature of Rajas *viddhi* : know it to be.

12. O scion of the Bharata race! Know that worship to be of the nature of Rajas, which is performed with its fruits in mind and for vain display.

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।

श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिक्रक्षते ॥ 13 ॥

Vidhihīnam asṛṣṭānnaṁ mantra-hīnam adakṣiṇam |
śraddhā-virahitam yajñam tāmasam paricakṣate //13//

Vidhihīnam : Without scriptural sanction *asṛṣṭānnaṁ* : without distribution of food *mantrahīnam* : without the chanting of Mantras *adakṣiṇam* : without gifts *śraddhāvīrahitam* : without faith *yajñam* : sacrifice *tāmasam* : of the nature of Tamas *paricakṣate* : is said to be.

13. That worship is of the nature of Tamas which is not sanctioned by scriptures, which is without gift of food, without the chanting of holy Mantras, without sacramental presents and without sincere faith.

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥ 14 ॥

Deva-dvija-guru-prājña-pūjanam śaucam ārjavam |
brahmacaryam ahimsā ca śārīraṁ tapa ucyate //14//

Deva-dvija-guru-prājña-pūjanam : Honouring of Devas, holy men, teachers and wise men *śaucam* : cleanliness *ārjavam* : uprightness *brahmacaryam* : celibacy *ahimsā* : non-injury *ca* : and *śārīram* : of the body. *tapah* : Tapas *ucyate* : is said to be.

14. Service of the Devas, holy men, teachers, parents and wise persons, as also observance of cleanliness, uprightness, continence and non-injury—these constitute austerities pertaining to the body.

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वाध्यायाम्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ 15 ॥

*Anudvega-karam vākyaṁ satyaṁ priya-hitam ca yat /
svādhyāy'ābhyasanam c'aiva vāṁmayam tapa ucyate* //15//

Anudvega-karam : Not painful *satyaṁ* : true *priya-hitam* : pleasant and beneficial *vākyaṁ* : words *ca* : and *svādhyāy'ābhyasanam* : regular recitation of scriptures *ca* : and *eva* : also *yat* : which *tat* : that *vāṁmayam* : of speech *tapah* : austerity *ucyate* : is said to be.

15. Speaking only words that are inoffensive, true, pleasant and beneficial as also regular recitation of scriptures constitute austerity pertaining to speech.

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ 16 ॥

*Manah-prasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ /
bhāva-saṁsuddhir ity-etat tapo mānasam ucyate* //16//

Manah-prasādaḥ : Serenity of mind *saumyatvaṁ* : gentleness *maunam* : moderation in speech *ātma-vinigrahaḥ* : self-control *bhāva-saṁsuddhiḥ* : purity of heart *iti etat* : this *mānasam* : mental *tapah* : austerity *ucyate* : is said to be.

16. Serenity of mind, gentleness, moderation in speech, self-control, and purity of heart—these are called austerity of the mind.

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः ।

अफलाकाङ्क्षिमिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥ 17 ॥

Śraddhayā parayā taptam tapas tat trividham naraiḥ |
aphal'ākāṅkṣibhir-yuktaiḥ sāttvikam paricakṣate //17//

Aphal'ākāṅkṣibhiḥ : Without desire for the fruits of action *yuktaiḥ* : established in mental equipoise *naraiḥ* : by men *parayā śraddhayā* : with the highest faith *taptam* : practised, *tat* : that *trividham* : threefold *tapas* : austerity *sāttvikam* : of the nature of Sattva *paricakṣate* : they declare.

17. This threefold austerity, performed with the highest faith, by men who are not motivated by expectations of reward and who are established in mental equipoise, is declared to be of the nature of Sattva.

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।

क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥ 18 ॥

Satkāra-māna-puj'ārtham tapo dambhena c'aiva yat |
kriyate tad iha proktam rājasam calam adhravam //18//

Satkāra-māna-pujārtham : For gaining recognition, praise and adoration *dambhena* : with show and ostentation *cā* : and *eva* : even *yat* : which *tapas* : austerity *kriyate* : is performed, *calam* : unsteady *adhravam* : leading to no permanent result *tat* : that *iha* : here *rājasam* : of the nature of Rajas *proktam* : is said to be.

18. The austerity that is performed with much show and ostentation, and having in view recognition, praise and adoration as a pious man by others, is said to be of the nature of Rajas. It is unstable and leads to no permanent good.

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।

परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ 19 ॥

Mūḍha-grāheṇ'ātmano yat pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ /
parasy'otsādanārthaṁ vā tat tāmasaṁ udāhṛtam

||19||

Mūḍha-grāheṇa : Prompted by perverse desires *ātmanaḥ pīḍayā* : by means of self-torture; *parasya* : of another *utsādanārthaṁ* : destruction *vā* : or *yat* : which *tapaḥ* : austerity *kriyate* : is performed; *tat* : that *tāmasaṁ* : of the nature of Tamas *udāhṛtam* : is spoken of as.

19. The austerity performed through the practice of self-torture under the influence of perverse theories or done for the destruction of another, is spoken of as Tāmasa by nature.

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।

देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥ 20 ॥

Dātavyam iti yad dānaṁ dīyate'nupakāriṇe /

deśe kāle ca pātre ca tad dānaṁ sāttvikam smṛtam . ||20||

Dātavyam : This gift should be given *iti* : thus *deśe* : in proper place *kāle* : at proper time *pātre* : to the proper recipients *ca* : and *anupakāriṇe* : to one who does not do anything in return *yat* : which *dānam* : gift *dīyate* : is done, *tat* : that *dānam* : gift *sāttvikam* : of the nature of Sattva *smṛtam* : is considered.

20. That gift which is made out of a sheer sense of duty, without expectation of any kind of return, at the proper time and place, to a fit recipient, is said to be of the nature of Sattva.

यस्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।

दीयते च परिकलिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ 21 ॥

Yat tu pratyupakā'rārthaṁ phalam uddiśya vā punaḥ
dīyate ca parikliṣṭam tad dānaṁ rājasam smṛtam

||21||

Pratyupakārārtham : From considerations of some benefit in return *phalam* : fruit, gain *uddiśya* : in view *vā* : or *parikliṣṭam* : grudgingly *yat* : which *tu* : indeed *punaḥ* : again *dīyate* : is given *ca* : and, *tat* : that *dānam* : gift *rājasam* : of the nature of *Rajas smṛtam* : is considered.

21. The gift which is given in consideration of some gift in return, or with some fruit to be reaped in future, or in a grudging mood—that is considered to be of the nature of *Rajas*.

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।

असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ 22 ॥

Adeśa-kāle yad dānam apātrebhyaś ca dīyate /
asatkṛtam avajñātaṁ tat tāmasam udāhṛtam //22//

Adeśakāle : At an improper place and time *apātrebhyaḥ* : to unworthy recipients *ca* : and *asatkṛtam* : unceremoniously *avajñātam* : slightingly *yaḥ* : which *dānam* : gift *dīyate* : is given, *tat* : that *tāmasam* : of the nature of *Tamas udāhṛtam* : is called.

22. The gift that is made at an improper time and place, to an unworthy recipient, unceremoniously and in a slighting manner—that is said to be of the nature of *Tamas*.

ओं तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥ 23 ॥

Om tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas tri-vidhaḥ smṛtaḥ /
brāhmaṇās tena vedāś ca yajñāś ca vihitāḥ purā //23//

Om tat sat : *Om Tat Sat iti* : thus *brahmaṇaḥ* : of *Brahman trividhaḥ* : threefold *nirdeśaḥ* : symbolic designation *smṛtaḥ* : is spoken of; *tena* : by that *brāhmaṇāḥ* : *Brāhmaṇas vedāḥ* : *Vedas ca* : and *yajñāḥ* : sacrifices *ca* : and *purā* : in ancient times *vihitāḥ* : were ordained.

23. Om Tat Sat—these are the three symbolic designations of Brahman. By these were ordained the Brāhmaṇas, the Vedas and the Yajñas in ancient times.⁵

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ 24 ॥

Tasmād om ity udāhṛtya yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ /
pravartante vidhān'oktāḥ satatam brahma-vādinām //24//

Tasmāt : Therefore *Brahma-vādinām* : of the followers of the Vedas *vidhānoktāḥ* : the ordained *yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ* : works of the nature of sacrifice, gift and austerities *Om iti udāhṛtya* : with the utterance of Om *satatam* : always *pravartante* are worked out.

24. Therefore the followers of the Vedas always start their ordained works like sacrifice, gift, and austerities with the utterance of Om.

तदित्यनमिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥ 25 ॥

Tad ity anabhisandhāya phalam yajña-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ /
dāna-kriyāś ca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ //25//

Phalam : Fruits *anabhisandhāya* : without desiring for *vividhāḥ* : various *yajña-tapaḥ kriyāḥ* : acts of sacrifice and austerity *dānakriyāḥ ca* : also works of a charitable nature *mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ* : by those who seek liberation *tat* : Tat (That) *iti* : thus (*udāhṛtya* : uttering *kriyante* : are performed.

25. Various forms of sacrifices, austerities and charities are performed without any desire for the fruits by seekers after liberation, along with the utterance of the syllable Tat (That).

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।

प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥ 26 ॥

*Sad-bhāve sādhu-bhāve ca sad ity etat prayujyate ।
praśaste karmaṇi tathā sac-chabdāḥ Pārtha yujyate ॥26॥*

Pārtha : O son of Prthā! *sadbhāve* : in the sense of reality, *sādhu-bhāve ca* : in the sense of goodness also *sat iti etat* : the syllable known as Sat *prayujyate* : is used; *tathā* : in the same way, *praśaste karmaṇi* : in auspicious rites *sac-chabdāḥ* : the syllable Sat *yujyate* : is used.

26. O son of Prthā! The syllable Sat is used in the sense of reality and goodness. It is also used to indicate an auspicious rite or act.

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।

कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ 27 ॥

*Yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ sad-iti-c'ocyate ।
karma c'aiva tad-arthīyaṁ sad ity ev'ābhidhīyate ॥27॥*

Yajñe : In Yajña or sacrifice *ca* : and *tapasi* : in austerity, *dāne ca* and in charity *sthitiḥ* : steadfastness *sat* : Sat (good) *iti ucyate* is called; *tad-arthīyaṁ karma* : any action connected with these *ca* and *eva* : also *sat iti* : as Sat *abhidhīyate* : is called.

27. Steadfastness in sacrifice (or worship), in austerity and in charity is called Sat (good). Any action connected with these is also called Sat.

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।

असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥ 28 ॥

*Aśraddhayā hutam dattam tapas-taptam kṛtam ca yat ।
asad-ity-ucyate Pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha ॥28॥*

Partha : O son of *Prthā*! *asraddhayā* : without faith *hutam* : offered in sacrifice *dattam* : offered in charity *taptam tapaḥ* : performed as austerity *yat ca kṛtam* : whatever else is done too, *tat* : that *asat* : Asat, not good *ucyate* : is called; *pretya* : in the hereafter *na ca* : it is not, *na iha* : here also it is not.

28. O son of *Prthā*! Whatever is performed as a sacrifice, charity, or austerity without Faith—in fact anything done without Faith—is declared to be Asat (not good). It is of no significance here or in the hereafter.

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अस्त्रायामिमांशयोगो
नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥ १७ ॥

NOTES

1. *Vr.1*: The topic of *Śraddhā* is discussed. It is translated as Faith with a capital. In its ideal form it is the whole-hearted and sincere acceptance of a supreme Spiritual Principle giving a meaning and direction to life, combined with a readiness to put into practice what one has accepted with conviction. It is much more than mere belief (*Viśvāsa*), which is a mere conventional acceptance of an idea without any conscious intention to put it into practice.

It is from the teaching of a scripture and of a teacher that one develops Faith. Now even without these authentic sources of Faith, there are people who develop faith in God and worship Him seeing others doing so. In their practice they may not follow all scriptural injunctions, not with intention to flout them, but because of their unawareness of them or lack of facilities to observe them. Enquiry is made as to whether this kind of *Śraddhā* is *Sāttvika*, *Rājasa*, or *Tāmasa*.

2. *Vrs.2-3*: Śraddhā is said to be born of *Svabhāva*—the character potential that one brings down from all one's past lives and attainments. So the firm and sincere acceptance of a spiritual principle depends not so much on reasoning or sense perception, but on an inner compulsion born of purity of character, which makes one feel that life is meaningless, and therefore useless, unless it has a spiritual source and purpose. As the verse 3 states, it is the Sāttvika element in man that generates Śraddhā in him. It is only diluted and diverted into different channels by Rajas or desire nature, and by Tamas or animal nature. All this depends on the *Svabhāva*, the character potential which one brings from one's evolution in past births. According to that, the nature of Śraddhā will vary as shown in subsequent verses.

Now the one point made clear is that the capacity found in man to have Śraddhā, Faith in a higher spiritual principle, is the result of *Sattva-guṇa*. In this respect man is entirely different from animals which are predominantly *Tāmasika* and have no *Sattva* at all. So Faith is a rare gift of God at the human level, just like reason and other higher faculties. So the tendency of some, who consider themselves super-rationalists, to look down upon Faith, reveals only their thoughtless ignorance. Only this rare faculty has to be purified by the elimination of Rajas and Tamas, and the enhancement of Sattva in which it is rooted.

Faith and reason are the two unique powers that come up at the human level of evolution. Animals do not have them. Both these powers function properly under favourable conditions alone—reason when well-cultivated under proper training and Faith when supported by a pure nature without much influence of passion and inertia. Purity of being is the nourishment that the latter requires. It is without understanding this uniqueness of Faith that ignorant critics speak of it as 'blind faith'. It is blind only when not nourished by purity.

The importance of Śraddhā is further emphasised by equating man's 'humanity' with the Śraddhā he entertains. It means that the stature of a man consists in the loftiness of the ideals and aspirations he sincerely cherishes and tries to practise.

3. *Vrs.4-6*: The aspirations and the types of ideals that attract the men dominated by each of the three *Guṇas*, are shown here. Those who are *Sāttvika* desire salvation and cultivate renunciation, divine love without motive, actions dedicated to God etc., and they will be drawn to Divine manifestations that bestow these excellences. These deities or ideals that attract the *Sattva*-bound souls can be called the *Devas*. The *Rājasa* worshippers are prompted by desires and ambitions, by greed of wealth and power. The attributes of the Divine that cater to such prayers and which attract such *Rājasic* minds is called here *Yakṣas* and *Rākṣasas*. The very unevolved and animal-like men, called here *Tāmasas*, can think of only ancestral spirits and elementals as objects of worship. But the most important point here is that all these types of men have Faith in some power higher than human and feel the need of prayer to, and worship of, that higher being. They have some *Śraddhā*, and this is so because in all beings that have evolved up to the human level there is an element of *Sattva*, which is the source of Faith. At the animal level it is not present. Atheism at the human level is a perversion arising from misapplied reasoning power. So too low forms of faith are perversions arising from an impure animal-like nature.

4. *Vr.7-10*: Purity of food has been very much insisted upon by the scriptures of Hinduism, as the body and the mind, being formed out of the food eaten, are very much influenced by it. In other religions there are only certain dogmatic prohibitions regarding the eating of some types of meat. While the influence of food on character has to be conceded in principle, whether all the theoretical ideas associated with this question are practicable in the present day conditions of life by aspirants in general, is open to question.

What the *Gītā* gives here is the enumeration of the qualities of food which people dominated by the three constituents of Nature prefer. Conversely it may also be taken that the consumption of foods belonging to the types mentioned, enhances the particular elements in one—be it *Sattva*, *Rajas* or *Tamas*. An impartial consideration of the characterisation of food given here in the *Gītā* will make one seriously doubt the soundness of some of the conventional ideas on food held in Hindu society. What would be the classification of meat in the light of the *Gītā* description of food?

It agrees with most of the qualities mentioned for *Sāttvika* food. Perhaps one may say it is *amedhya*, unclean, and therefore not *Sāttvika*. But one forgets that in Vedic society many kinds of meat were considered *medhya*—offerable in sacrifice—and therefore fit to be eaten. What will be the place given for cheese, which is foul smelling to non-eaters, but has all the qualities of a *Sāttvika* food, excepting the smell? What will be the place of all refrigerated foods, as also of those prepared long hours before but preserved in hot air compartments? So while these characteristics cited may be taken as helpful in a general assessment of the purity and impurity of food, it will be unreasonable to be too dogmatic. Dogmatic views about food held by many pious Hindus deserve rethinking in the modern conditions of life, giving place to a less fanatical and narrow out-look on the whole question.

5. *Vrs.* 23-26: *Om, Tat, Sat* are very holy words. They represent Brahman, and are Brahman Himself in sound form. *Om* is called *Śabda-brahma*, Sound-Brahman, as it is said to be the essence of the Veda, and the sound-symbol of Brahman and the seed of all Mantras. *Tat* or That is equally indicative of Brahman, as borne out by the great Vedic dictum *Tat tvam asi*—That Thou art. Here the That is Brahman. So also *Sat*, meaning Truth or Reality, is equally representative of Brahman. The Upanishad says *Sad evedam agra āsit*—in the beginning *Sat* alone existed. Thus these three words indicate Brahman, and are very holy—so holy that they can never be polluted, but on the other hand remedy all pollutions and shortcomings. In the performance of all Vedic rites, there are likely to be shortcomings of the nature of omissions and commissions in respect of the Mantras and forms used, or in the persons performing, or in the time and place of their performance. So the utterance of these words are offered as the remedy against all such actual, suspected or possible shortcomings. The utterance of these holy words are therefore an unavoidable part of all *Yajñas* and holy work. *Brāhmaṇa* is one who knows the Veda or *Brahma*. Veda is the basis of all *Yajñas*. So all these three go together.

Chapter XVIII

मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः

LIBERATION THROUGH RENUNCIATION

SUMMARY

True Abandonment: (1-12) As in the previous chapter, the early sections of this the last chapter also emphasize the part played by the three Guṇas of Prakṛti in all human affairs. It opens with a question by Arjuna about the distinction between *Sannyāsa* and *Tyāga*. The Lord replies: Abandonment of ritualistic works with promises of specific rewards is called by sages as *Sannyāsa*, while performance of all action without an eye on their fruits is *Tyāga*. Some say that all actions are to be abandoned because there is some element of evil in every action, but others are of the opinion that actions like Yajña, charity, austerity etc., are never to be abandoned. My view is that actions like Yajña, charity and austerity are never to be abandoned, because they purify man when performed without attachment and desire for fruits. To abandon a duty because of fear of difficulties involved, is positively bad. It is impossible for any embodied being to abandon all work. So true abandonment has to be taken to mean work without attachment to fruits and without the sense of ego. Actions done in that spirit never bind.

How the Bondage of Actions is overcome: (13-18) In all actions there are five factors involved—the body, the I-sense of the performer, senses, expression of energy through them, and as the fifth, the unknown and incalculable factor. All these are factors belonging to Prakṛti. Behind it is the pure light of consciousness, the Atman, who is the unaffected witness. In ignorance, this pure witness

identifies himself with these factors external to him and their performances, and creates bondage for himself. So if the actor has no feeling like 'I am doing', and no attachment to the fruits accruing, it can be said that he does not act, even if all the world sees him acting in the physical sense.

The Three Guṇas as the determinative factors: (18-39) Sattva: Dispositions of Prakṛti—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—determine the nature of knowledge, action and agent. Knowledge dominated by Sattva leads to the understanding of unity in diversity; actions dominated by it tend to detachment and freedom from passionate affiliations; a doer dominated by it is comparatively free from ego-sense and attachment but yet does not lack enthusiasm and interest in the work; the intelligence dominated by it is always accompanied by moral sensibility and an eye to the spiritual side of things; strength of mind dominated by it is expressed as control of the senses and the mind, and as strict adherence to principles; and experience dominated by it is painful in the beginning due to difficulties of discipline, but ends in great bliss.

Rajas: Knowledge dominated by Rajas directs attention to the diversity of things and not their unity; work dominated by it results in actions done with great attachment, egotism and expenditure of energy; an agent dominated by it is greedy, cruel, attached and subject to elation and depression; intelligence dominated by it is riddled with confusion about right and wrong and has little sense of duty; strength dominated by it is under the sway of ambitions, desires and worldly status; and happiness dominated by it is extremely attractive in the beginning due to sensual excitement but in its final result brings about suffering.

Tamas: Knowledge dominated by Tamas sees mere side-issues as the whole truth and doggedly holds on to them without due thought, under the prompting of passions; action dominated by Tamas is undertaken thoughtlessly without any estimate of one's capacity or resources, and is prompted by delusions and cruel motives; the agent dominated by Tamas is fickle-minded, insolent, exploiting, procrastinating and slipshod in his methods; intelligence dominated by Tamas sees unrighteousness as righteousness and takes the wrong side of everything; strength or determination dominated by Tamas is always subject to depression, vacillation,

and overbearing insolence; and pleasure dominated by Tamas is from the beginning to the end riddled with delusion, lethargy and heedlessness.

Guṇas and character types: (40-44) Everything in Nature being thus dominated by the Guṇas, the character types—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra—and the duties pertaining to them are also no exception to this domination. Intellectualism and introspectiveness; dynamism and leadership; industry and productiveness; discipline and service at all levels—these are the duties of the four character types based on their natural constitutions.

Work as worship: (45-49) Knowing that all one's endowments are derived from universal Nature, which is the Lord's power of manifestation, man must worship that Supreme Being with the faithful and non-attached discharge of the duties that devolve on him. That is real worship, and by that man evolves spiritually. By the mere fact that there are some defective elements in a work, one's duty cannot be abandoned. For, defects are natural to all works as smoke is to fire. If discharged in a dedicated and detached spirit, as an offering to the Lord who manifests as society, all blemishes are overcome.

Spiritual fulfilment through total abandonment: (50-56) For men who have grown mature through devotion and dedicated work and attained to detachment and dispassion, there are two courses open. Those who are favourably situated for it may take to a pure ascetic life in solitude, and devote themselves to the practice of pure introspection. Such practice endows him with motiveless love of the Lord—a love not influenced by any of the forces of Nature (*Nirguṇa-bhakti*). By such love he attains to a comprehensive and intuitive understanding of the Divine and realises himself as a part and parcel of the Divine Life.

Spiritual fulfilment through resignation: (56-66) Those who have not that facility for complete withdrawal from social life, can continue to do their Svadharma with complete dependence on Me, the Lord of all. Such a one should mentally renounce all sense of agency for the works that flow through him, and externally he should have no longing or attachment for the fruits of his actions. One who thus infills his mind with Me, overcomes all difficulties and

attains to the highest spiritual fulfilment. For the truth is that all beings are like objects placed on a wheel, and I (the Lord of all) alone turn the wheel. Those on the wheel, if they think they are turning it, are in utter ignorance. Seek shelter in Me with your whole being, and you shall attain peace. This profoundest spiritual Gospel I reveal to you now. Be filled with Me; worship Me; make prostrations to Me. Abandoning dependence on every kind of ego-centred support, seek Me alone as your refuge. I shall save you from the life of ignorance and sin.

To whom the Gītā is relevant: (67-68): This great spiritual doctrine is to be taught only to those who are spiritually inclined. Such teaching is highly pleasing to Me, as they are thereby worshipping Me with *Jñāna-yajña*.

Conclusion: Wherever Kṛṣṇa the Lord of Yoga, and Arjuna the enforcer of Dharma, function unitedly, there will reign both prosperity and spirituality.

अर्जुन उवाच

संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।

त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna uvāca:

*Samnyāsasya mahā-bāho tattvam icchāmi veditum
tyāgasya ca Hṛṣīkeśa prthak Keśi-niṣūdana*

||1||

Hṛṣīkeśa: O conquerer of the senses! *Keśiniṣūdana:* O destroyer of Keśin! *Mahābāho:* O mighty armed one! *saṁnyāsasya:* of *Samnyāsa* (renunciation) *tyāgasya:* of *Tyāga* (abandonment, resignation) *ca:* and *tattvam:* the true nature *prthak:* in their distinctive meanings *veditum:* to know *icchāmi:* I desire.

Arjuna said:

1. O mighty-armed One, famed as the destroyer of Keśin and the conqueror of the senses! I desire to know the true nature of *Samnyāsa*, and as distinguished from it, of *Tyāga* too.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ 2 ॥

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca:

*Kāmyānām karmaṇām nyāsaṁ saṁnyāsaṁ kavayo viduḥ /
sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ prāhus tyāgaṁ vicakṣaṇāḥ* //2//

Kāmyānām : of desire-prompted *karmaṇām* : actions *nyāsaṁ* : abandonment *saṁnyāsaṁ* : *Samnyāsa kavayaḥ* : sages *viduḥ* : speak of; *sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ* : giving up the fruits of all actions *tyāgaṁ* : *Tyāga vicakṣaṇāḥ* : men with insight *prāhuḥ* : declare.

2. Abandonment of all desire-prompted actions is *Samnyāsa* (renunciation) according to the wise. Men of discernment speak of the abandonment of the fruits of all actions as *Tyāga* (relinquishment).

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥ 3 ॥

*Tyājyaṁ doṣavad ity eke karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ /
yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyam iti c'āpare* //3//

Karma : Action *doṣavat* : as being evil *tyājyam* : is to be abandoned, *iti* : thus *eke* : some *manīṣiṇaḥ* : wise men *prāhuḥ* : say, *yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma* : actions like sacrifice (worship), charity and practice of austerity *na tyājyam* : are not to be abandoned *iti* : thus *ca* : and *apare* : others.

3. Some wise men say that all action is to be abandoned as evil. Others maintain that good works like worship, charity and practice of austerity are not to be abandoned.

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।

त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याप्त त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः ॥ 4 ॥

*Niścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge Bharata-sattama /
tyago hi puruṣa-vyāghra tri-vidhaḥ saṁprakīrtitaḥ* //4//

Bharatasattama : The best among the Bhārata clan! *tat* : in the matter *tyāge* : regarding abandonment *me* : My *niścayam* : conclusive view *śṛṇu* : hear; *puruṣavyāghra* : O best of men! *tyāgaḥ* : abandonment *trividhaḥ* : three kinds *samprakīrtitaḥ* : is declared to be *hi* : indeed.

4. O the best of the Bhārata race! Hear my conclusive view on this subject of Tyāga (relinquishment). It is said that there are three types of Tyāga.

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥ 5 ॥

Yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyaṁ kāryam eva tat /
yajño dānaṁ tapaś-c'aiva pāvanāni manīṣiṇām //5//

Yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma : works like sacrifice, charity and austerity *na tyājyaṁ* : are not to be given up, *tat* : they *kāryam eva* : are to be performed; *yajñaḥ* : sacrifice *dānaḥ* : charity *tapaḥ* : austerity *cā eva* : and also *manīṣiṇām* : for the wise men *pāvanāni* : purifying *eva* : indeed.

5. Works like sacrifice, charity and austerity should not be abandoned. They should be performed; for sacrifice, charity and austerity are indeed purifying for the wise.

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।

कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥ 6 ॥

Etāny api tu karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā phalāni ca /
kartavyāni'ti me Pārtha niścitaṁ matam uttamam //6//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *etāni* : these *Karmāṇi* : actions *api tu* : even *saṅgam* : attachment *phalāni* : fruits *ca* : and *tyaktvā* : abandoning *kartavyāni* : are to be performed, *iti* : this *me* : My *niścitaṁ* : settled *uttamam* : final *matam* : view.

6. O Son of Pṛthā! Even these works are to be performed without attachment and desire for their fruits. This is My settled and decisive view.

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।

मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ 7 ॥

*Niyatasya tu saṁnyāsaḥ karmaṇo n'opapadyate /
mohāt tasya parityāgas tāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ*

||7||

Niyatasya : What should necessarily be performed as duty *karmaṇaḥ* : of works *saṁnyāsaḥ* : renouncing *tu* : indeed *na upapadyate* : is not proper; *mohāt* : through delusion *tasya* : its *parityāgaḥ* : abandonment *tāmasaḥ* : of the nature of Tamas *parikīrtitaḥ* : is spoken of.

7. It is not at all proper to renounce works that ought to be done as duty. Their abandonment out of delusion is considered to be of the nature of Tamas.

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशमयात्यजेत् ।

स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥ 8 ॥

*Duḥkham ity eva yat karma kāya-kleśa-bhayāt tyajet /
sa kṛtvā rājasam tyāgam n'aiva tyāga-phalam labhet*

||8||

Kāyakleśabhayāt : Out of fear of physical suffering *duḥkham* : painful *iti eva* : this is indeed (*yaḥ* : who) *yat* : which *karma* : action *tyajet* : abandons, *saḥ* : he *rājasam* : of the nature of Rajas *tyāgam* : relinquishment *kṛtvā* : doing, *tyāga-phalam* : the result of relinquishment *na labhet eva* : does not at all get.

8. Those who give up work out of a dread of physical suffering, out of a feeling that it is painful, they, performing relinquishment of a Rājasa nature, do not obtain the results of true relinquishment.

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।

सङ्गत्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ 9 ॥

*Kāryam ity eva yat karma niyataṁ kriyate'rjuna /
Saṅgam tyaktvā phalam c'aiva sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ*

||9||

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *niyataṁ karma* : ordained work, duty *kāryam* : ought to be done, *iti* : feeling thus *saṅgam* : attachment *phalam* : results *ca* : and *eva* : also *tyaktvā* : relinquishing *kriyate* : is performed *yat* : which, *saḥ* : that *tyāgaḥ* : relinquishment *sāttvikaḥ* : born of Sattva *mataḥ* : is considered.

9. But, O Arjuna! That relinquishment is considered as Sāttvika, which consists in giving up attachment and thoughts of returns in respect of works, and which is done with the feeling that it is an obligatory duty that must necessarily be performed.

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ 10 ॥

Na dveṣṭy akuśalam karma kuśale n'ānuṣajjate /
tyāgī sattva-samāviṣṭo medhāvī chinna-saṁśayaḥ //10//

Sattva-samāviṣṭaḥ : One imbued with the Sattva quality *medhāvī* : wise man *chinna-saṁśayaḥ* : one whose doubts have been dispelled *tyāgī* : relinquisher *akuśalam karma* : unpleasant duty *nā dveṣṭi* : never hates *kuśale* : in pleasant duties *na ānuṣajjate* : is not attached.

10. The relinquisher (Tyāgī), if he is endowed with the qualities of Sattva, wisdom and conviction in regard to the spiritual ideal, never avoids duties merely because they are unpleasant, nor does he get attached to works that seem pleasant to him.

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्मण्यशेषतः ।

यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ 11 ॥

Na hi deha-bhṛtā śakyaṁ tyaktuṁ karmāṇy aśeṣataḥ /
yaś tu karma-phala-tyāgī sa tyāgī'ty abhidhiyate //11//

Dehabhṛtā : By one having a body *karmāṇi* : actions *aśeṣataḥ* : in their entirety *tyaktuṁ* : to abandon *na śakyaṁ* : not possible *hi* : indeed; *yaḥ* : who *tu* : but *karma-phala-tyāgī* : gives up the fruits

of actions *saḥ* : he *tyāgī* : relinquisher *iti* : thus *abhidhīyate* : is called.

11. It is not indeed possible for any embodied being (i.e., one with body consciousness) to abandon works in entirety. So all that one can do is to abandon the fruits of action. One doing so is called a *Tyāgī* (a relinquisher).²

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।

भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥ 12 ॥

Aniṣṭam iṣṭam miśraṁ ca tri-vidhaṁ karmaṇaḥ phalam /
bhavaty-atyāginām pretya na tu saṁnyāsinaṁ kvacit //12//

Karmaṇaḥ : Of Karma *aniṣṭam* : unpleasant *iṣṭam* : pleasant *miśram* : mixed *ca* : and *trividham* : threefold *phalam* : fruits *atyāginām* : for those who do not relinquish the fruits of actions *pretya* : after death *bhavati* : accrues; *saṁnyāsinaṁ* : to those who renounce *tu* : but *kvacit na* : never.

12. Regarding those who have not relinquished their desires (*a-tyāginām*), they reap after death the fruits of their actions performed with desire. They are of three sorts—‘unpleasant’ like degradation into animal life or stay in purgatory for the very wicked; ‘pleasant’ like attainment of heavenly felicities for the virtuous; and ‘mixed’ as in human birth, for those who have Karmas of both these types to their credit. But *Saṁnyāsins* (true renouncers) will have none of these.³

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥ 13 ॥

Pañc'aitāni mahā-bāho kāraṇāni nibodha me /
sāṁkhya kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarva-karmaṇām //13//

Mahābāho : O mighty armed! *sarvakarmaṇām* : of all actions *siddhaye* : required for the accomplishment *kṛtānte* : which is the end of all actions *sāṁkhya* : in the philosophy of spiritual illumina-

tion *proktāni* : described *imāni* : these *pañca* : five *kāraṇāni* : causal factors *me* : from *Me nibodha* : understand.

13. Learn from me, O mighty armed! about the five causal factors required for all actions as described in the *Sāṅkhya*, the philosophy of spiritual illumination, which is the ultimate purpose of all actions.⁴

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ 14 ॥

Adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā karam ca prthag-vidham ।
vividhāś ca prthak ceṣṭā daivam c'aivātra pañcamam ॥14॥

Adhiṣṭhānam : the seat of action i.e. the body *tathā* : also *kartā* : the ego that claims to be the actor *prthagvidham* : various kinds of *karam* : instruments of action *ca* : and *vividhāś* : varied *prthak* : distinct *ceṣṭāś* : movements *ca* : and *atra* : in this *pañcamam* : the fifth *daivam* : the unknown factor or the deities presiding over the senses *ca eva* : and also.

14. One's body which is the seat of action, the ego claiming to be the actor, the several instruments of actions (like the senses, the mind etc.), the varied and the distinct types of movements involved, and finally the unknown factor (or the deities presiding over the senses) as the fifth—these are the five causal factors.

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥ 15 ॥

Śarīra-vāṅ-manobhir yat karma prārabhate naraḥ ।
nyāyyaṁ va viparītaṁ vā pañc'aite tasya hetavaḥ ॥15॥

Naraḥ : Man *śarīra-vāṅ-manobhiḥ* : with the body, word and mind *nyāyyaṁ* : right *vā* : or *viparītaṁ* : opposite i.e. wrong *yat* : which *karma* : Karma *prārabhate* : performs, *tasya* : of that etc : these *pañcahetavaḥ* : are the five causal factors.

15. These are the five causal factors involved in all actions, good as also bad, which men undertake with this body, speech and mind.

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥ 16 ॥

*Tatr'aivam sati kartāram atmānam kevalam tu yaḥ /
paśyaty akṛta-buddhitvān na sa paśyati durmatih* //16//

Tatra evam sati : That being so, *ātmānam* : the Self *kevalam* : alone (or the unlimited and unrelated Being) *tu* : verily *kartāram* : as actor *yaḥ* : who *paśyati* : sees, *durmatih* : of perverted outlook, *saḥ* : he *akṛta-buddhitvāt* : on account of the impurity of his intellect *na paśyati* : does not perceive the truth.

16. That being so, he whose imperfect understanding makes him think that the self alone (or the unlimited and unrelated Ātman) is the agent involved in work—he verily sees not, being perverted in outlook.

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वापि स इमांल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ 17 ॥

*Yasya n'āhaṁkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate /
hattvā'pi sa imāṁl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate* //17//

Yasya : For whom *ahaṁkṛtaḥ bhāvaḥ* : the feeling 'I am the agent' *na asti* : there is not, *yasya* : whose *buddhiḥ* : intellect *na lipyate* : is unsullied, *saḥ* : he *imān lokān* : these beings *hattvā* : killing *api* : even *na hanti* : does not kill, *na nibadhyate* : is not bound by the action.

17. He who is ever established in the feeling 'I am not the agent' and whose mind is consequently unsullied by attachments—he kills not really, nor is he bound, even though he annihilates all these beings.

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।

करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥ 18 ॥

*Jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ pariñātā tri-vidhā karma-codanā . |
karaṇaṁ karma kart'eti tri-vidhaḥ karma-saṁgrahaḥ ||18||*

Jñānam : Knowledge *jñeyam* : object of knowledge *pariñātā* : the knower *trividhā* : threefold *karma codanā* : incitement to action; *karaṇam* : instruments of action (senses) *karma* : the purpose of action *kartā* : the agent *iti trividhaḥ* : these three *karmasaṁgrahaḥ* : form the constituents of action.

18. Knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower—these constitute the threefold incitement to action. And the three constituents of action are the instruments of action, the purpose of action, and the agent.

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिष्वैव गुणमेवतः ।

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥ 19 ॥

*Jñānaṁ karma ca kartā ca triḥ'aiva guṇa-bhedaḥ |
procyate guṇa-saṁkhyāne yathāvacchrṇu tāny-api ||19||*

Guṇa-saṁkhyāne : In the philosophy of Guṇas and their evolutes i.e. in the Sāṁkhya philosophy *jñānam* : knowledge *karma* : action *ca* : and *kartā* : agent *ca* : and *guṇabhedaḥ* : according to the different Guṇas *tridhā* : of three kinds *eva* : as *procyate* : is spoken of; *tāni api* : of them also *yathāvat* : as they are *śṛṇu* : hear.

19. In the Sāṁkhya philosophy dealing with the Guṇas and their evolutes, knowledge, action and agent are each divided into three according to the preponderance of each Guṇa in them. Hear of them also as they are.

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ 20 ॥

*Sarva-bhūteṣu yen'aikaṁ bhāvam avyayaṁ īkṣate |
avibhaktaṁ vibhakteṣu taj jñānaṁ viddhi sāttvikaṁ ||20||*

Vibhakteṣu : Divided *sarvabhūteṣu* : in all beings *avibhaktam* : undivided *ekam* : unitary *avyayam* : unmodifiable *bhāvam* : Essence *yena* : by whom *īkṣate* : sees, *tat* : that *jñānam* : knowledge *sāttvikam* : of Sattva *viddhi* : know.

20. That knowledge by which one is able to see a unitary unmodifiable Essence, undivided among the divided,—know that knowledge to be of the nature of Sattva.

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान् ।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ 21 ॥

Prthaktvena tu yaj jñānam nānā-bhāvān prthag-vidhān /
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu tuj jñānam viddhi rājasam //21//

Sarveṣu bhūteṣu : In all beings *nānābhāvān* : multiplicity *prthag-vidhān* : mutually distinct *prthaktvena tu* : in their separateness only without perception of an underlying unity *yaj* : which *jñānam* : knowledge *vetti* : knows, *tat* : that *jñānam* : knowledge *rājasam* : of the nature of Rajas *viddhi* : know.

21. That knowledge which apprehends all beings as a multiplicity with mutual distinction and in their separateness only, without any apprehension of an underlying unity—know that knowledge to be born of Rajas.

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहेतुकम् ।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ 22 ॥

Yat tu kṛtsnavad ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam /
atativ'arthavad alpaṁ ca tat tāmasam udāhṛtam //22//

Ekasmin : In one single *kārye* : effect, part *kṛtsnavat* : as if it were the whole *saktam* : is attached i.e. dogmatically holds on *ahaitukam* irrational *atativ'arthavat* : untrue *alpaṁ* : silly *ca* : and *yat tu* : which, *tat* : that knowledge *tāmasam* : born of Tamas *udāhṛtam* is spoken of as.

22. That by which one dogmatically holds on to a part as if it were the whole (or looks on the body, an effect, as the whole man)—a view which is irrational, untrue and silly—that knowledge is said to be born of Tamas.

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।

अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥ 23 ॥

*Niyataṁ saṅga-rahitaṁ arāga-dveṣataḥ kṛtaṁ /
aphala-prepsunā karma yat tat sāttvikam ucyate*

||23||

Yat : Which *niyataṁ karma* : obligatory work, duty *aphala-prepsunā* : by one without hankering for the fruits *saṅga-rahitaṁ* : without attachment *arāga-dveṣataḥ* : without passion or hate *kṛtaṁ* : done, *tat* : that work *sāttvikam* : as born of Sattva *ucyate* : is spoken of.

23. Work of the nature of duty done by one without hankering for fruits, and without attachment, or passion or hate—such work is spoken of as born of Sattva.

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।

क्रियते बह्व्यासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥ 24 ॥

*Yat tu kām'epsunā karma s'āhaṁkāreṇa vā punaḥ
kriyate bahul'āyāsaṁ tad rājasam udāhṛtaṁ*

||24||

Yat : which *tu* : but *karma* : action *kāmeṣunā* : by one wanting to gratify one's desires *sāhaṁkāreṇa* : with the feeling of self-importance *vā* : or *punaḥ* : again *bahulāyāsaṁ* : with great strain *kriyate* : is performed, *tat* : that *rājasam* : born of Rajas *udāhṛtaṁ* : is said to be.

24. But work that is done by a person merely for the gratification of his desire, and with great strain and a feeling of self-importance is said to be born of Rajas.

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनपेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥ 25 ॥

Anubandham kṣayam hiṁsām anapekṣya ca pauruṣam |
mohād-ārabhyate karma yat tat tāmasam ucyate ||25||

Anubandham : Consequences *kṣayam* : loss *hiṁsām* : injury to others *pauruṣam* : one's own capacity *ca* : and *anapekṣya* : without regard to *mohāt* : due to delusion *yat* : which *karma* : action *ārabhyate* : is begun, *tat* : that *tāmasam* : born of Tamas *ucyate* : is spoken of as.

25. And that work which is performed under delusion, without any regard to consequences, loss, injury to others, and to one's own capacity—is said to be born of Tamas.

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्धयोर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ 26 ॥

Mukta-saṅgo'naham-vādī dhr̥ty-utsāha-samanvitaḥ |
siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikāraḥ kartā sāttvika ucyate ||26||

Muktasaṅgaḥ : Free from attachment *anahamvādī* : without pride and self-importance *dhr̥ty-utsāha-samanvitaḥ* : endowed with steadiness and zeal *siddhy-asiddhyoḥ* : in success and failure *nirvikāraḥ* : unruffled *kartā* : doer *sāttvikaḥ* : possessed of Sattva *ucyate* : is spoken of as.

26. A 'doer' (an agent of an action) who is without any attachment and sense of pride and self-importance, who is endowed with steadiness and zeal, and who is unruffled in success and failure—such a doer is said to be of the nature of Sattva.

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।
दृष्यशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ 27 ॥

Rāgī karma-phala-prepsur lubdho hiṁs'ātmako'suciḥ |
harṣa-śok'ānvitaḥ kartā rājasah parikīrtitaḥ ||27||

Rāgī : One who is swayed by passion *karma-phala-prepsuḥ* : one who seeks the fruits of his actions *lobdhaḥ* : covetous *himsātmakaḥ* : cruel *aśuciḥ* : impure *harṣa-sokānvitaḥ* : subject to elation and depression *kartā* : doer *rājasaḥ* : as endowed with *Rājas parikṛtiṭaḥ* : is declared.

27. A 'doer' who is swayed by passion, who is keen on the fruits of his actions, who is covetuous, cruel and impure at heart, and who is subject to elation and depression in success and failure—such a doer is said to be of the nature of *Rajas*.

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।

विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ 28 ॥

Ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko'lasaḥ /
viṣādī dīrgha-sūtrī ca kartā tāmasa ucyate //28//

Ayuktaḥ : Unsteady *prākṛtaḥ* : vulgar *stabdhaḥ* : arrogant *śaṭhaḥ* : deceitful *naiṣkṛtikaḥ* : malicious *alasaḥ* : indolent *viṣādī* : despondent *dīrghasūtrī* : procrastinating *ca* : and *kartā* : doer *tāmasaḥ* : of the nature of *Tamas* *ucyate* : is said to be.

28. And a 'doer' who is unsteady, vulgar, arrogant, deceitful, malicious, indolent, despondent, and procrastinating—such a doer is said to be of the nature of *Tamas*.

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।

प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥ 29 ॥

Buddher bhedaṁ dhṛteś'caiva guṇataś tri-vidhaṁ śṛṇu /
procyamānam aśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya //29//

Dhanañjaya : O Arjuna! *buddheḥ* : of the intellect, understanding *dhṛteḥ* : of the power of determination *ca* : and *eva* : also *guṇataḥ* : according to Nature's dispositions *trividhaṁ* : threefold *bhedam* : distinction *aśeṣeṇa* : wholly *pṛthaktvena* : severally *procyamānam* : what is being declared *śṛṇu* : hear.

29. Hear now, O Arjuna, of the threefold division of the intellect and of the power of determination on the basis of their constituent Guṇas—hear of them severally and in their totality.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।

बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ 30 ॥

*Pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca kāry'ākārye bhay'ābhaye /
bandham mokṣam ca yā vetti buddhiḥ sā Pārtha sāttvikī //30/*

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *pravṛttim ca* : self-centred activity, worldliness *nivṛttim ca* renunciation *kāryākārye* : what should be done and what should not be done i.e. what is the moral and what is the immoral *bhayābhaye* : what is to be feared and not feared *bandham mokṣam ca* : bondage and freedom *yā* : which *buddhiḥ* : intellect *vetti* : knows, *sā* : that (*buddhiḥ* : intellect) *sāttvikī* : is of the nature of Sattva.

30. O son of Pṛthā! That intellect is said to be of the nature of Sattva which grasps the distinction between worldliness and renunciation, between the moral and the immoral, between what should be feared and what should not be, and between knowledge and freedom.

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।

अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ 31 ॥

*Yayā dharmam adharmam ca kāryam c'ākāryam eva ca
ayathāvat prajānāti buddhiḥ sā Pārtha rājasī //31///*

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *yayā* : by which *dharmam* : the moral, the right *adharmam* - the immoral, the wrong *ca* : and *kāryam* : what should be done *ca* : and *ākāryam* : what should not be done *eva ca* : and also *ayathāvat* : not as they are, in a distorted manner *prajānāti* : understands, *sā buddhiḥ* : that intellect *Rājasī* : is of the nature of Rajas.

31. O son of Pṛthā! That intellect is said to be of the nature of Rajas, which takes a distorted and confused view of the moral and the immoral, of what should be done and what should not be.

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।
सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ 32 ॥

Adharmam dharmam iti yā manyate tamasā vṛtā |
sarvārthān viparītānś ca buddhiḥ sā Pārtha tāmasī //32//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *yā* : which *tamasā* : by darkness *āvṛtā* : covered *adharmam* : the immoral *dharmam* : the moral *iti* : as *sarvārthān* : all things *viparītān* : in a contrary manner *ca* : and *manyate* : understands, *sā* : that *buddhiḥ* : intellect *tāmasī* : is of the nature of Tamas.

32. O son of Pṛthā! That intellect is of the nature of Tamas, which, covered by the darkness of ignorance, understands the immoral as the moral and thus reverses all values.

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या दृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ 33 ॥

Dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥ-prāṇendriya-kriyāḥ |
yogena'vyabhicāriṇyā dhṛtiḥ sā Pārtha sāttvikī //33//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *yogena* : by concentration *avyabhicāriṇyā* : unswerving *yayā* : by which *dhṛtyā* : by power of determination *manaḥ-prāṇendriya-kriyāḥ* : the activities of the mind, the vital breaths and the senses *dhārayate* : holds under control, *sā* : that *dhṛtiḥ* : power of determination *sāttvikī* : is of the nature of Sattva.

33. O Son of Pṛthā! That power of determination is of the nature of Sattva, by which the mind, the vital energy and the senses are held in control through unswerving concentration.

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।

प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ 34 ॥

Yayā tu dharma-kām'ārthān dhṛtyā dhārayate'rjuna /
prasaṅgena phal'ākāṅkṣī dhṛtiḥ sā Pārtha rājasī //34//

Arjuna: O Arjuna! *yayā* : by which *dhṛtyā* : power of determination *tu* : but *dharma-kām'ārthān* : duty, pleasure and wealth *dhārayate* : holds on to *prasaṅgena* : with passionate attachment *phalākāṅkṣī* : one desirous of fruits, *sā* : that *dhṛtiḥ* : determination *rājasī* : is of Rajas.

34. That power of determination is of the nature of Rajas, by which one holds on to duty, pleasure and wealth with passionate attachment motivated by the desire for their fruits.

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।

न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ 35 ॥

Yayā svapnam bhayaṁ śokaṁ viṣādam madam eva ca /
na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā Pārtha tāmasī //35//

Durmedhāḥ: One of perverted intelligence *yayā* : by which *svapnam* : sleep *bhayaṁ* : fear *śokaṁ* : grief *viṣādam* : despondency *madam* : frenzy of sensuous indulgences *eva ca* : and also *na vimuñcati* : does not give up *sā* : that *dhṛtiḥ* : power of determination *tāmasī matā* : is of the nature of Tamas.

35. That power of determination is of the nature of Tamas, due to which one of perverted intelligence does not give up sloth, fear, grief, despondency and frenzy of sense indulgences.

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।

अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥ 36 ॥

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।

तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥ 37 ॥

Sukham tu idānīm tri-vidham śṛṇu me .Bhārata'rṣabha |
abhyāsād ramate yatra duḥkh'āntam ca nigacchati ||36||

Yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme'mṛt'opamam |
tat sukham sātṭvikam proktam ātma-buddhi-prasāda-jam ||37||

Bharatarṣabha : O the greatest in the Bhārata clan! *tri-vidham* : three kinds *sukham* : pleasure *tu* : also *idānīm* : now *me* : from Me *śṛṇu* : hear; *abhyāsāt* : by practice *yatra* : in which *ramate* : comes to rejoice *duḥkhāntam* : end of all sorrows *nigacchati* : attains to *ca* : and, *yat* : which *tat* : that *agre* : in the beginning *viṣam* : poison *iva* : like, *pariṇāme* : in the end *amṛtopamam* : like nectar *ātma-buddhi-prasāda-jam* : born of the serenity arising from consciousness of the Ātman, *tat sukham* : that happiness *sātṭvikam* : of Sattva in nature *proktam* : is declared.

36-37. Hear from Me now about the three kinds of pleasures, O the greatest of the Bhārata clan! That pleasure is said to be of the nature of Sattva which is gained by long practice of disciplines, which puts an end to all sorrows that man is heir to, which is like poison in the beginning but nectar-like at the end, and which springs from the serenity arising from the consciousness of the Ātman.

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।

परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ 38 ॥

Viṣay'endriya-samyogād yat tad agre'mṛt'opamam |
pariṇāme viṣam iva tat sukham rājasam smṛtam ||38||

Viṣay'endriya-samyogāt : By the union of the senses with their objects *yat* : which *tat* : that *agre* : in the beginning *amṛtopamam* : like nectar *pariṇāme* : in the end *viṣam iva* : like poison *tat sukham* : that pleasure *rājasam* : of the nature of Rajas *smṛtam* : is declared.

38. That pleasure is declared to be of the nature of Rajas, which is born of the union of the senses with their objects, which seems nectar-like in the beginning but turns to be poison in the end.

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।

निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ 39 ॥

*Yad agre c'ānubandhe ca sukham mohanam ātmanah /
nidr'ālasya-pramād'ottham tat tāmasam udāhṛtam //39//*

Yat : Which *sukham* : pleasure *nidr'ālasya-pramād'ottham* : which springs from sleepiness, sloth and heedlessness, *agre ca* : in the beginning *anubandhe* : in the end *ca* : and *ātmanah* : of the Ātman *mohanam* : delusive, *tat* : that *tāmasam* : born of Tamas *udāhṛtam* : is declared.

39. That pleasure is of the nature of Tamas, which springs from sleepiness, sloth and heedlessness, and which is delusive in its effect on the spirit from beginning to end.

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।

सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥ 40 ॥

*Na tād asti prthivyām vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ /
sattvaṁ prakṛti-jair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ //40//*

Prakṛtijaiḥ : born of Prakṛti *ebhiḥ* : by these *tribhiḥ* : three *guṇaiḥ* : Guṇas *muktaṁ* : free from *sattvaṁ* : being *yad* : which *syāt* : exists, *tat* : that *prthivyām* : on the earth *vā* : or *divi* : in the heavens *deveṣu* : among Devas *vā* : or *punaḥ* : again *na asti* : does not exist.

40. Nowhere, be it in this world or in the heavenly regions of the Devas, is there any being who is free from these three Guṇas of Nature (Prakṛti).

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।

कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥ 41 ॥

*Brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-viśāṁ śūdrāṇāṁ ca paramtapa /
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni svabhāva-prabhavair-guṇaiḥ //41//*

Param̐tapa : O great hero! *brāhmaṇa-kṣātriya-viśam* : of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas *sūdrāṇāṃ* : of Sūdras *ca* : and *karmāṇi* : duties *svabhāva-prabhavaṇi guṇāṇi* : according to qualities born of their own nature *pravibhaktāni* : have been divided.

41. O great hero! The duties of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and also of Sūdras have been divided according to the qualities born of their own nature.⁵

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ 42 ॥

Śamo damas-tapaḥ śaucam kṣāntir-ārjavam eva ca |
jñānam vijñānam āstikyam brahma-karma svabhāva-jam ॥42॥

Śamaḥ : Serenity *damaḥ* : control of the senses *tapah* : austerity
śaucam : purity *kṣāntiḥ* : forbearance *ārjavam* : straightforwardness
eva : also *ca* : and *jñānam* : knowledge *vijñānam* : insight *āstikyam* :
faith in a Supreme Being *svabhāvajam* : born of one's own nature
brahmakarma : the duties of a Brāhmaṇa.

42. Serenity, control of the senses, austerity, purity, straightforwardness, knowledge, insight, and faith in the Supreme Being—these are a Brāhmaṇa's duties born of his own nature.

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्वैर्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।

दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ 43 ॥

Śauryam tejo dhṛtir dākṣyam yuddhe c'āpyapalāyanam |
dānam īśvara-bhāvaś ca kṣātram karma svabhāva-jam ॥43॥

Śauryam : Prowess *tejaḥ* : splendour of personality *dhṛtiḥ* : un-
failing courage *dākṣyam* : resourcefulness *yuddhe apalāyanam* :
not fleeing (dauntlessness) in battle *api* : also *ca* : and *dānam* :
generosity *īśvarabhāvaḥ* : lordliness, leadership *ca* : and *svabhā-
vajam* : born of one's own nature *kṣātram* : pertaining to a Kṣatriya
karma : duty.

43. Prowess, splendour of personality, unfailing courage, resourcefulness, dauntlessness in battle, generosity, leadership—these are a Kṣatriya's duties born of his specific nature.

कृषिगौरव्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।

परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥ 44 ॥

Kṛṣi-gaurakṣya-vāṇijyam vaiśya-karma svabhāva-jam /
paricary'ātmakam karma śūdrasy'āpi svabhāva-jam //44//

Kṛṣi-gaurakṣya-vāṇijyam : Agriculture; cattle-rearing, and trade
svabhāvajam : born of one's nature *vaiśya-karma* : duty of a Vaiśya;
paricaryātmakam : subordinate service *śūdrasya* : of the Śūdra
api : also *svabhāvajam* : born of one's nature.

44. Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade form the duty of the Vaiśya springing from his own nature, while the natural duty of a Śūdra consists in subordinate service under others.

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥ 45 ॥

Sve sve karmany abhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ /
sva-karma-nirataḥ siddhiṁ yathā vindati tac-chṛṇu //45//

Sve sve karmaṇi : In one's own (natural) duty *abhirataḥ* : devoted
naraḥ : man *saṁsiddhiṁ* : spiritual competency *labhate* : attains to;
svadharma-nirataḥ : one devoted to one's own natural duty
yathā : how *siddhiṁ* : spiritual competency *vindati* : acquires, *tat* : that
śṛṇu : hear.

45. By being devoted to one's own natural duty, man attains to spiritual competency. Now hear how devotion to one's own natural duty generates spiritual competency.⁶

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ 46 ॥

Yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānāṁ yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam /
sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarcya siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ //46//

Yataḥ : From whom *bhūtānām* : of beings *pravṛttiḥ* : emanation, *yena* : by whom *idam* : this *sarvam* : all *tatam* : is pervaded, *tam* : Him *mānavaḥ* : man *svakarmaṇā* : by his own duty *abhyareya* : worshipping *siddhim* : spiritual competency *vindati* : attains.

46. From whom all beings have emanated and by whom all this universe is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the dedicated performance of one's duty, man attains to spiritual competency (Siddhi).

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ 47 ॥

Śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt |
svabhāva-niyataṁ karma kurvan n'āpnoti kilbiṣam ||47||

Svanuṣṭhitāt : Than the well-performed *para-dharmāt* : duty of another *viguṇaḥ* : without excellence *svadharmaḥ* : one's own duty *śreyān* : is more meritorious; *svabhāvaniyataṁ* : ordained according to one's nature *karma* : work *kurvan* : doing *kilbiṣam* : sin *nā* : does not *āpnoti* : incur.

47. One's own duty, even if without excellence (i.e. inferior in the scale of worldly values), is more meritorious spiritually than the apparently well-performed duty of another. For, no sin is incurred by one doing works ordained according to one's nature, (that is, in consonance with one's own natural evolution.)⁷

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनान्निविष्टाः ॥ 48 ॥

Sahajaṁ karma Kaunteya sadoṣam api na tyajet | "
sarv'ārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmen'āgnir iv'āvṛtāḥ

||48||

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *sahajaṁ* : born with oneself *karma* : work *sadoṣam api* : even if attended with imperfections *na* : do not *tyajet* : abandon; *sarv'ārambhāḥ* : all undertakings *dhūmena* : by smoke *agnih* : fire *iva* : as *doṣeṇa* : by imperfections *āvṛtāḥ* : covered *hi* : indeed.

48. O son of Kuntī! Do not abandon the duty that is natural to you, even if some imperfections are incidental to it. For there is no undertaking without some imperfections, even as there is no fire without a covering of smoke.

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥ 49 ॥

*Asakta-buddhiḥ sarvatra jit'ātmā vigata-sprhaḥ /
naiṣkarmya-siddhiṁ paramām samnyāsen'ādhigacchati* //49//

Sarvatra : Everywhere *asaktabuddhiḥ* : with mind unattached
jit'ātmā : self-subdued *vigatasprhaḥ* : with all desires abandoned
samnyāsenā : by renunciation *paramām* : supreme *naiṣkarmya-siddhiṁ* : perfection of transcendence of work *adhigacchati* : attains.

49. Completely non-attached, self-subdued, and desireless, an aspirant attains the supreme perfection of transcendence of work through renunciation.⁸

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥ 50 ॥

*Siddhiṁ prāpto yathā brahma tath'āpnoti nibodha me /
samāsenaiṁ Kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā* //50//

Siddhiṁ : Perfection in transcendence of work *prāptaḥ* : one who has attained to *yā* : which *jñānasya* : of knowledge *parā* : highest
niṣṭhā : consummation *brahma* : Brahma *yathā* : how *āpnoti* : attains, *tathā* : that *samāsenā* : in brief *eva* : even, *me* : from Me
nibodha : learn.

50. Now hear from Me in brief how one who is established in the perfection of transcendence of work attains to Brahma, the highest consummation of knowledge.

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।
शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥ 51 ॥

विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।
ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥ 52 ॥

अहंकारं बलं दपं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ 53 ॥

Buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhṛtyā'tmānam niyamya ca /
sabdādīn viṣayāṁś tyaktvā rāga-dveṣau vyudasya ca ॥51॥

Vivikta-sevī laghvāśī yata-vāk-kāya-mānasaḥ /
dhyāna-yoga-paro nityam vairāgyam samupāśritaḥ ॥52॥

Ahaṁkāraṁ balam darpaṁ kāmam krodham parigraham /
vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto brahma-bhūyāya kalpate ॥53॥

Viśuddhayā : With purified *buddhyā* : intelligence *yuktaḥ* : endowed with, *dhṛtyā* : by firmness *ātmānam* : the self *niyamya* : controlling *ca* : and, *sabdādīn viṣayān* : sensations like sound and the rest *tyaktvā* : abandoning, *rāga-dveṣau* : attachments and antagonisms *vyudasya* : having abandoned *ca* : and, *vivikta-sevī* : resorting to solitary places *laghvāśī* : eating sparingly, *yata-vākkāyamānasaḥ* : having speech, body and mind under control, *nityam* : always *dhyānayogaparaḥ* : devoted to meditation, *vairāyam* : dispassion *samupāśritaḥ* : depending on, i.e. established in, *ahaṁkāram* : egoism, conceit *balam* : strength, violence *darpaṁ* : arrogance *kāmam* : lust *krodham* : anger *parigraham* : property, possessiveness *vimucya* : abandoning *nirmamaḥ* : selfless *śāntaḥ* : tranquil *brahma-bhūyāya* : for attainment of Brahma-nature (Ātman consciousness) *kalpate* : becomes fit.

51-53. Endowed with a purified intellect, established in self-control, abandoning the life of the senses as also attachments and antagonisms; frequenting solitary places; reducing food to the minimum; having speech, body and mind under control; ever meditative; endued with dispassion; abandoning conceit,

violence, lust, anger and possessiveness; self-less and tranquil, he becomes fit for beatification in Brahma-consciousness (Ātman-consciousness.).⁹

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ 54 ॥

Brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati /
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktim labhate parām //54//

Brahmabhūtaḥ : Brahma-become *prasannātmā* : tranquil in spirit, *na śocati na kāṅkṣati*: neither grieves nor desires; *sarveṣu bhūteṣu* : to all beings *samaḥ* : alike *parām* : the supreme *madbhaktim* : devotion to Me *labhate* : obtains.

54. Brahma-become (established in Ātman-Consciousness), tranquil in spirit, free from grief and passions, and regarding all beings alike, he attains supreme devotion to Me.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥ 55 ॥

Bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś c'āsmi tattvataḥ /
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram //55//

Bhaktyā : By devotion *mām* : Me : *yāvān* : how much, what *yaḥ* : who *ca* : and *asmi* : I am, *tattvataḥ* : in truth and in reality *abhijānāti* : he knows; *tataḥ* : then *mām* : Me *tattvataḥ* : in truth and in reality *jñātvā* : knowing, *tad-anantaram* : forthwith or at once *viśate* : enters into Me.

55. By devotion does he come to know Me—both my extent and My essence. Knowing Me thus in truth and in reality, he enters into Me at once.

सर्वकर्मण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्ब्रथपाश्रयः ।

मत्प्रसादाद्वाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमेव्ययम् ॥ 56 ॥

Sarva-karmāṇy api sadā kurvāṇo mad-vyapāśrayaḥ /
mat-prasādād avāpnoti śāśvataṁ padam avyayam //56//

Sarvakarmāṇi : All kinds of work *api* : also *sadā* : always *kurvāṇaḥ* : performing, *madvyapāśrayaḥ* : he who has taken refuge in Me *matprasādāt* : by My grace *śāśvatam* : eternal *avyayam* : indestructible *padam* : state *avāpnoti* : obtains.

56. Though performing every kind of work always, he who has taken refuge in Me shall, by My grace, attain to the eternal and indestructible state of Mokṣa (spiritual liberation).¹⁰

चेतसा सर्वकर्मणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥ 57 ॥

Cetasā sarva-karmāṇi mayi samnyasya mat-parah /
buddhi-yogam upāśritya mac-cittaḥ satataṁ bhava //57//

Cetasā : With the mind *sarva-karmāṇi* : all actions *māyī* : in Me *samnyasya* : resigning, *mat-parah* : intensely devoted to Me *buddhi-yogam* : communion of intellectual love *upāśritya* : adopting, *mac-cittaḥ* : mind constantly fixed in Me, *satatam* : always *bhava* : be

57. Mentally resigning all actions to Me (in respect of their fruits and agency), devoting yourself intensely to Me, and ever practising the communion of intellectual love, be you ever established in the thought of Me.

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।

अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारात् न श्रोष्यसि विनश्यसि ॥ 58 ॥

Mac-cittaḥ sarva-durgāṇi mat-prasādāt tariṣyasi /
atha cet tvam ahaṅkārāt na śroṣyasi vinakṣyasi //58//

Maccittaḥ : Established in My thought *tvam* : you *mat-prasādāt* : by My grace *sarva durgāṇi* : all obstacles *tariṣyasi* : will overcome; *atha* : but *tvam* : you *ahaṅkārāt* : due to self-conceit *na* : not *śroṣyasi* : listen *cet* : if *vinakṣyasi* : you will perish.

58. If you are thus ever in communion with Me in mind, you will overcome every obstacle. But if, out of self-conceit, you do not listen to Me, destruction will be your fate.

यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।

मिथ्यैव व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्यति ॥ 59 ॥

*Yad ahaṁkāraṁ āśritya na yotsya iti manyase
mithy'aiṣa vyavasāyas te prakṛtiḥ tvāṁ niyokṣyati* //59//

Ahaṁkāraṁ : Self-conceit *āśritya* : taking recourse to *na yotsye* : I will not fight *iti* : thus *yat* : which *manyase* : think. *eṣaḥ* : this *te* : your *vyavasāyaḥ* : resolution *mithyā* : vain; *prakṛtiḥ* : Nature *tvāṁ* : you *niyokṣyati* ; will compel.

59. Vain is your resolve not to fight, born as it is of self-conceit. Nature will compel you.

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।

कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥ 60 ॥

*Svabhāva-jena Kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā /
kartuṁ n'ecchasi yan mohāt kariṣyasi vaśo'pi tat* //60//

Kaunteya : O son of Kuntī! *svabhāva-jena* : sprung from one's own nature *svena karmaṇā* : by duties natural to one *nibaddhaḥ* : fettered, *mohāt* : out of delusion *yat* : which *na* : not *icchasi* : do not desire, *tat* : that *api* : even *avaśaḥ* : helplessly *kariṣyasi* : you will do.

60. O son of Kuntī! Duties which your natural tendencies have imposed upon you, but which out of delusion you refuse to do, even them you will have to perform by the compulsion of Nature.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

श्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ 61 ॥

*Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati /
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantr'ārūḍhāni māyayā* //61//

Arjuna : O Arjuna! *yantrārūḍhāni* : mounted on a wheel *sarva-bhūtāni* : all beings *māyayā* : by his mysterious power : *bhrāmayan* : revolving, *īśvaraḥ* : the Lord *sarva-bhūtānām* : of all beings *hr̥dḍeṣe* : in the heart *tiṣṭhati* : dwells.

61. O Arjuna! The Lord dwells in the heart of all beings revolving them all by His mysterious Power Māyā, as if they were objects mounted on a machine.

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ 62 ॥

Tam eva śaraṇam gaccha sarva-bhāvena Bhārata /
tat-prasādāt parām śāntim sthānam prāpsyasi śāśvatam ||62||

Bhārata : O scion of Bharata's clan *sarvabhāvena* : with your whole being *tam* : Him *eva* : even *śaraṇam* : as refuge *gaccha* : go to; *tatprasādāt* : by His grace *parām* : supreme *śāntim* : peace *śāśvatam* : everlasting *sthānam* : abode *prāpsyasi* : will attain.

62. O scion of Bhārata's clan! Seek refuge in Him, making a total surrender of your being—body, mind and soul. By His grace you shall attain to supreme peace and the everlasting abode.

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ 63 ॥

Iti te jñānam ākhyātam guhyād guhyataram mayā /
vimṛśy'aitad aśeṣeṇa yath'ecchasi tathā kuru ||63||

Iti : Thus *guhyāt* : than any secret *guhyataram* : more secret *jñānam* : wisdom *mayā* : by Me *te* : to you *ākhyātam* : has been imparted; *etat* : this *aśeṣeṇa* : in its entirety *vimṛśya* : having reflected upon *yathā* : as *icchasi* : wish, think fit *tathā* : so *kuru* : do.

63. Thus have I imparted to you wisdom which is more secret (profound) than all that is secret (profound). Reflecting over this whole teaching, do as you think fit. 11

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

इष्टोऽसि मे ददमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥ 64 ॥

Sarva-guhyatamaṁ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ . /
iṣṭo'si me dṛḍham iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam //64//

Sarva-guhyatamaṁ : The profoundest spiritual wisdom *me* : My *paramaṁ* : supreme *vacaḥ* : word *bhūyaḥ* : again *śṛṇu* : hear; *me* My *dṛḍham* : firm *iṣṭaḥ* : beloved *asi* : you are; *iti* : thus *tataḥ* : therefore *te* : your *hitam* : what is beneficial *vakṣyāmi* : I shall speak.

64. Listen again to My supreme word, the profoundest of all spiritual teachings. You are well beloved of Me; and so I shall tell you what is beneficial to you.¹²

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ 65 ॥

Man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaḥ-kuru /
mām ev'aiṣyasi satyaṁ te pratijāne priyo'si me //65//

Manmanāḥ : With mind absorbed in Me *bhava* : be, *madbhaktaḥ* : be My devotee, *madyājī* : be my worshipper; *mām* : Me *namaskuru* : salute, prostrate, be resigned; *mām eva* : Me alone *eṣyasi* : you shall come to ; *te* : to you *satyaṁ* : in truth *pratijāne* : I promise; *me* : of Me *priyaḥ* : beloved *asi* : you are.

65. Let your mind be engrossed in Me. Be devoted to Me. Offer worship to Me. Be resigned to Me. Beloved as you are of me, I pledge in troth you shall come to Me alone.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ 66 ॥

Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja /
aḥaṁ tvā sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ //66//

Sarvadharmān : All Dharmas *parityajya* : abandoning; *mām* : to Me *ekam* : the One (or only) *śaraṇam* : refuge *vraja* : take; *aham* : I *tvām* : you *sarva-pāpebhyaḥ* : from all sins *mokṣayiṣyāmi* : will free; *mā* : do not *śucaḥ* : grieve.

66. Abandoning dependence on all Dharmas (or on human efforts at moral and spiritual upliftment), come to Me as the only Refuge. Grieve not; I will deliver you from all sins.

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥ 67 ॥

Idam te n'ātapaskāya n'ābhaktāya kadācana |

na c'āśuśrūṣave vācyaṁ na ca mām yo'bhyasūyati //67//

Idam : This knowledge *atapaskāya* : to one who is not austere in life *kadācana* : at any time *te* : by you *na vācyaṁ* : not to be spoken; *abhaktāya na ca* : not to one devoid of devotion; *āśuśrūṣave na ca* : nor to one who has not rendered service; *yaḥ* : who *mām* : Me *abhyasūyati* : cavils *na ca* : and not.

67. This should on no account be imparted to those who do not practise austere living, who have no devotion to Me, who cavil at Me, and are devoid of the discipline of service.¹³

य इदं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।

भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥ 68 ॥

Ya idam paramam guhyam mad-bhakteṣv abhidhāsyati |

bhaktim mayi parāṁ kṛtvā mām ev'aiṣyaty asamsayaḥ //68//

Paramam guhyam : Supremely profound doctrine *idam* : this *madbhakteṣu* : among My devotees *yaḥ* : who *abhidhāsyati* : imparts *saḥ* : he *mayi* : in Me *parāṁ* : supreme *bhaktim* : devotion, loving service *kṛtvā* : having done or practised *asamsayaḥ* : undoubtedly *mām* : Me *eva* : even *eṣyati* : shall reach.

68. He who teaches this supremely profound doctrine among men devoted to Me, having thereby offered to Me the highest form of loving service, shall undoubtedly come to Me alone.

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।

भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥ 69 ॥

*Na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ /
bhavitā na ca me tasmād anyañ priyaturo bhuvi //69//*

Tasmāt : Than him *me* : to Me *priyakṛttamaḥ* : one who performs a service more pleasing *manuṣyeṣu* : among men *kaścit* : any one *na ca* : not and; *me* : to Me *tasmāt* : than Him *priyataraḥ* : more dear *anyañ* : another *bhuvi* : in the world *bhavitā* : shall be *na ca* : and not.

69. No man can do anything more pleasing to Me than he, and nor shall any one on earth be dearer to Me than he.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।

ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥ 70 ॥

*Adhyeṣyate ca ya imam dharmyam samvādam āvayoḥ /
jñāna-yajñena tenā'ham iṣṭaḥ syām iti me matiḥ //70//*

Āvayoḥ : Of us both *dharmyam* : sacred *imam* : this *samvādam* : conversation *yaḥ* : who *ca* : and *adhyeṣyate* : shall study, *tena* : by him *aham* : I *jñānayajñena* : by the sacrifice of knowledge *iṣṭaḥ* : worshipped *syām* : I shall have been *iti* : thus *me* : My *matiḥ* : view.

70. It is My view that he who studies this conversation between us should be regarded as adoring Me with a sacrifice of knowledge.

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।

सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥ 71 ॥

*Śraddhāvān anasūyaś-ca śṛṇuyād api yo naraḥ /
so'pi muktaḥ śubhān lokān prāpnuyāt puṇya-karmaṇām //71//*

Yaḥ : Whichever *naraḥ* : man *śraddhāvān* : having faith *anastīyaḥ* : without fault-finding *ca* : and *śṛṇuyāt* : will hear *api* : even *saḥ* : he *api* : even *muktaḥ* : being liberated, *puṇyakarmanām* : of those performing righteous deeds *śubhān* : happy *lokān* : regions *prāpnuyāt* : shall attain.

71. Even a man who listens to this holy conversation between us, with deep faith and receptiveness, shall attain to liberation and the happy regions open to righteous men.

कच्चिदेतत् श्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाम्रेण श्रुतसा ।

कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रणष्टस्ते घनंजय ॥ 72 ॥

Kaccid etac chrutaṁ Pārtha tvay'aik'āgreṇa cetasā /
kaccid ajñāna-sammohaḥ prapaṣṭas te dhananjaya //72//

Pārtha : O son of Pṛthā! *etat* : this *tvayā* : by you *ekāgreṇa* : with concentrated *cetasā* : mind *śrutam* : heard, *kaccid* : whether *dhananjaya* : O Dhananjaya or O Arjuna! *te* : your *ajñāna-sammohaḥ* : delusion born of ignorance *prapaṣṭaḥ* : destroyed *kaccid* : whether.

72. Has this teaching been heard by you, O Arjuna, with a concentrated mind? Has all delusion born of ignorance been dispelled from you, O Dhananjaya?

अर्जुन उवाच

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाऽच्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ 73 ॥

Arjuna uvāca :

Naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā tvat-prasādān may'acyuta /
sthito'smi gata-sandehaḥ kariṣye vacanam tava //73//

Acyuta : O undecaying one! *tvatprasādāt* : by Thy grace *mohaḥ* : delusion *naṣṭaḥ* : is destroyed; *smṛtiḥ* : memory of one's nature as the Ātman *mayā* : by me *labdhā* : obtained; *gata-sandehaḥ* : with doubts dispelled *sthitaḥ* : firm *āsmi* : I am; *tava* : Thy *vacanam* : words *kariṣye* : I will do.

Arjuna said:

73. My delusion has been dispelled and my memory restored by Thy grace, O Undecaying Lord! I now stand firm, with all my doubts cleared, ready to execute Thy command.¹⁴

संजय उवाच

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।

संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥ 74 ॥

Sañjaya uvāca

*Ity aham Vāsudevasya pārthasya ca mahātmanaḥ /
saṁvādam imam aśrauṣam adbhutam roma-harṣaṇam //74//*

Iti : Thus *aham* : I *vāsudevasya* : of Vāsudeva, *Kṛṣṇa mahātmanaḥ pārthasya* : of the high-souled Pārtha *ca* : and *adbhutam* : wonderful *roma-harṣaṇam* : causing hair to stand on end *imam* : this *saṁvādam* : conversation *aśrauṣam* : have heard.

Sañjaya said:

74. Thus have I heard, with my hair standing on end, this wonderful conversation between Kṛṣṇa and the high-souled son of Pṛthā.

व्यासप्रसादात् श्रुत्वानेतद्गुह्यमहं परम् ।

योगं योगेश्वरात्कुष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥ 75 ॥

*Vyāsa-prasādāt śrutavān etad guhyam aham param /
yogam yog'eśvarāt kṛṣṇāt sāksāt kathayataḥ svayam //75//*

Vyāsa-prasādāt : By the grace of sage Vyāsa *guhyam* : profound *param* : supreme *etat* : this *yogam* : Yoga *svayam* : himself *kathayataḥ* : teaching *yog'eśvarāt* : from the Lord of Yoga *Kṛṣṇāt* : from Kṛṣṇa *aham* : I *sāksāt* : directly *śrutavān* : heard.

75. Thus did I, by Vyāsa's grace, directly hear Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga, Himself teaching this Yoga, profound and supreme.

राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।

केशवार्जुनयोः पुन्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ 76 ॥

Rājan saṁsmṛtya-saṁsmṛtya saṁvādam imam adbhutam |
Keśav'āṛjunayoḥ puṇyam hr̥ṣyāmi ca muhur muhuḥ //76//

Rājan : O King! *Keśav'āṛjunayoḥ* : of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna *adbhutam* :
astounding *puṇyam* : sacred *imam* : this *saṁvādam* : dialogue
saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya : remembering again and again *muhuḥ*
muhuḥ ca : again and again *hr̥ṣyāmi* : rejoice.

76. Again and again, O king, does the memory of that
sacred and astounding dialogue between Keśava and Arjuna
come to my mind, causing no end of joy.

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।

विस्मयो मे महान् राजन् हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥ 77 ॥

Tac ca saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya rūpam atyadbhutam Hareḥ |
vismayo me mahān rājan hr̥ṣyāmi ca punaḥ-punaḥ //77//

Rājan : O King! *Hareḥ* : of Hari *atyadbhutam* : most marvellous
tat:that *ca*: and *rūpam*: form *saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya*: remembering
and remembering *me* : my *vismayaḥ* : wonder *mahān* : is great
punaḥ punaḥ : again and again *hr̥ṣyāmi* : I rejoice *ca* : and.

77. Again and again does that most wondrous form of Hari
arise to my mind, generating great astonishment and endless
thrills of joy.

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीविजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ 78 ॥

Yatra yog'eśvaraḥ Kṛṣṇo yatra Pārtho dhanur-dharaḥ |
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhrūvā nītir matir mama //78//

Yatra : where *yogeśvaraḥ* : the Lord of Yoga *kṛṣṇaḥ* : Kṛṣṇa, *yatra* : where *dhanurdharaḥ* : armed with bow *pārthaḥ* : Arjuna, *tatra* : there *śrīḥ* : good fortune *vijayaḥ* : victory *bhūtiḥ* : prosperity *dhruvā* : enduring, sound *nītiḥ* : policy, *mama* : my *matiḥ* : conviction.

78. Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga, accompanied by Arjuna wielding the bow—there reign good fortune, victory, prosperity and sound policy. Such is my conviction.

ओं तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे मोक्षसंन्यासयोगो
नामाष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥ 18 ॥

श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु

NOTES

1. *Vrs.1-7*: *Samnyāsa* and *Tyāga* are words meaning more or less the same. Here the distinction between them is said to consist in this: *Samnyāsa* is the abandonment of works that are generally done for the sake of rewards accruing in this world and the next. *Tyāga* is the abandonment of fruits of all actions i.e., continuing in the sphere of actions without any claim to the fruits of actions. The first of these expressions seems to have special reference to Vedic ritualism which prescribes many ritualistic actions promising ample rewards in the hereafter.

Among the followers of *Samnyāsa*, the Lord now points to some who maintain that all actions, whether with fruits or without fruits, are causes of bondage, and therefore form an evil that deserves to be abandoned. The Lord differs from this view and maintains that His final view regarding abandonment is that only desire-prompted works need be abandoned, and that devotional and altruistic works like worship, austerity, and service through charity should be done by all, because they are holy and sanctifying.

It is clear from the final assertion of the Lord in verse 6 that the Gita teaching requires all, whether they are men of knowledge or otherwise, to do worship of God and service of fellow-beings.

It is maintained by some schools of thought that this assertion of the Lord in favour of work has reference only to men in ignorance and to the Yogins, whereas the Sāṁkhyas (knowing ones) are free from every kind of works and are free also from the compulsion of duty. There is however nothing in the context to support such a view restricting it to the ignorant only. While the Gītā does not object or criticise the pure Sāṁkhyan view of abandonment of every form of work accompanied with knowledge or even as a preparatory discipline, its preference is for all aspirants undertaking some works of the nature of worship and philanthropy, as also of the nature of duty, at all stages of spiritual development. *Niskāma-karma* or unselfish work is an all-pervasive doctrine of the Gītā. The aspirant abandons all the fruits to the Lord, and the enlightened one abandons the sense of agency also to Him, seeing the Divine Will working through the wills of all. The enlightened one is free from the promptings of the ego in all work he undertakes.

2. *Vr.11*: This verse confirms what was said earlier that man at all stages of spiritual development should engage in works of the nature of worship and service of fellow beings. The clinching argument given in support of it is that no one who has got a body can live without any work. There is no living being without a body, including the enlightened Sāṁkhya. So the expression has to be interpreted, as 'one with body-consciousness.' Every one except one merged in perpetual Samadhi has body-consciousness. It therefore means that work is a universal law binding all men. So the best an aspirant can do is to offer to the Lord the fruits of works and the sense of agency.

3. *Vr.12*: The word '*Samnyāsin*' is a special term applied to those who have taken to the fourth stage of life. The expression '*Samnyāsins*', as used here, includes those of the fourth Order who eschew all work after enlightenment, as well as others who continue to work, whether they be *Samnyāsins* in the Āśrama sense or are persons without the emblems of *Samnyāsa*, provided they resign the fruits of work and the sense of agency to the Lord. In other words according to the Gītā workless *Samnyāsins* with knowledge, as also working *Samnyāsins* and non-*Samnyāsins* who offer the fruits of work and sense of agency to the Lord—all alike are eligible for liberation.

4. *Vrs.13-17*: The five factors mentioned as involved in work are all aspects of Prakṛti, and as such distinct from the Ātman. Ignorance is the state in which the Ātman, who is distinct from the conglomeration of these five factors, identifies himself with this conglomeration and feels himself to be the performer of its activities. This identification is experienced as the I-sense. If this false identification is overcome, there is none to own an act and its consequence, beyond the unconscious elements of Prakṛti. This is the experience of the knowing one; all his so-called actions, whether good or bad, are amoral, as there is no 'I' to own them. The act of killing is mentioned here only because the teaching is in the context of battle. It only means that actions in general become amoral in the case of a knowing one, and not that a licence is given to him for all kinds of unethical acts. If however, in the fulfilment of the world-mission, a knowing one happens to do actions that look unethical from the ordinary point of view, it has no such effect on him; they are amoral just like any event in Nature, because there is no ego behind such actions. Sri Ramakrishna compares the actions of knowing ones to a burnt rope. In shape it looks like a rope even after burning, but it has lost the power of binding.

5. *Vrs.41-44*: A great doctrine of the social philosophy of ancient India, regarding the fourfold class system, is here propounded. There has been no doctrine so much misapplied, misunderstood and misrepresented as this doctrine. The four *Varnas* of Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra are today and for a long time past, understood as four hereditary castes. But the *Varnas*, as understood by the best Indian thinkers, are not castes based on birth in particular groups, but character types based on the domination of the *Sāttvika*, *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika* elements entering into the constitution of their body-mind, and this is determined by their evolution in their past lives. At least such is the Gītā view. To have identified character types with endogamous social groups is nothing but an aberration. It is in regard to the fourfold class based on character that the Lord says in 4.13 *Cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam*—the Order of four classes is My creation. Here also (verse 41) he speaks of duties pertaining to them as born of the constituents of Nature forming their body-mind. See also Notes on Gītā 4.13.

These four character types are universal all the world over

and the prosperity of a society will depend on the man of the right nature and character being put to the right type of duty. For the individuals also doing the duty that is natural to his psycho-physical constitution, is the way of higher evolution.

6. *Vr.45-46*: These two great verses of the *Gītā* link man's social duties with spiritual discipline. By cultivating a special attitude towards work, work is turned into worship, and the distance between the shrine room and the work-spot disappears. This philosophy is based upon a fundamental faith that this world and the progress of life in it are all under the guidance of a Supreme Intelligence, who is the master of it all, and whose will is expressed in all its movements. If man has got this faith, man ceases to be self-centred. He comes to view himself as a worker of God, and all that he does comes to be done with a sense of dedication to Him. Such work as accrues to one according to one's nature and is done with a spirit of dedication, is called *Svadharmā*, one's natural duty. This outlook on one's work makes a man free from corruption and negligence, and induces him to put his best effort into his work. If an attitude of this type were accepted in a society as a whole, it will be the best social philosophy, besides being a spiritual doctrine. It will secure the social good as also bring about the individual's spiritual evolution.

A natural objection to this way of understanding *Cāturvarṇya* (the society with fourfold division) is that all commentators understood the four *Varṇas* as endogamous groups called castes, and the 'natural duty' (*Svadharmā*) of theirs as the profession that was traditionally and scripturally allotted to those groups under the four distinctive names. Such interpretations of the *Gītā* were given at a time when these endogamous caste groups were a recognised feature of Indian society, and thinkers considered birth in a group as tantamount to character type. The mistake of such identification was obvious to many thinkers of the past. So some of them have made some kind of amends for it by admitting that if great disparity in quality is found in the actual quality of a *Kṣatriya* with the traditionally ascribed qualities, he can become a *Brāhmaṇa*. But all rationality seems to have been neutralised by the very strong prejudice in favour of endogamy.

Stratification into four classes of the priests, the nobility,

agriculturists and traders, and serfs existed in all ancient societies, and even among the modern European races, until industrialisation, quick travel, and the modern idea of a welfare State whittled down the importance and practicability of endogamous social groups. But in Indian society with a tradition of more than ten thousand years perhaps, social systems got crystallised into rigid forms, and classes lost their fluidity and became organised as rigid castes. Consequently class duties came to be considered as identical with the caste duties of particular hereditary groups, and consequently all the shortcomings of the modern caste system of Indian society came into vogue.

But what the Lord speaks of here as *Cāturvarṇya* should never be identified with castes, because the *Varṇa* is said to be solely dependent on character formed by the *Guṇas* of *Prakṛti*. It is only an ideal grouping based on psychological principle and not on rigid hereditary basis.

Besides, the *Gītā* is a universal Gospel addressed to all mankind, for all time, and not merely to the Indian society of a particular age. In no part of the world except in India, caste system strictly based on birth seems to have existed. Loose classes there have been, but not rigid castes with unchangeable duties and occupations for subsistence. So the old commentators have done great injustice to Sri Kṛṣṇa in watering down the significance of his message as relevant only to members of the rigid Indian social system.

The only practical way of applying the *Gītā* teaching in this respect today is to consider the duty to which one is called, as one's *Svadharmā*. Strictly *Svadharmā* is work according to one's nature. But until an ideal and efficient social system comes into vogue, it may not be possible to give every one a work for which he is suited by his character type. What could be done today, if one's duty is not according to one's nature, is to change it for a more suitable one, considering the former as *Paradharmā*, the duty of another type of character. But today most men are found seeking not a duty ; temperamentally suitable to them, but what will bring them the maximum income. When a duty is valued solely for the income it fetches, it ceases to be a pursuit of a *Dharma* or a spiritual value. Receiving remuneration for services is unavoidable for man in the world, but what is unspiritual is to value

the work only for its remuneration, forgetting that the work he does is an offering to God, irrespective of the remuneration he gets.

It is said in Verse 46 that when one's duty is discharged with the attitude that it is an offering to the Supreme Being, who is the creator and master of the worlds, then in the long run the man who practises such a discipline attains *Siddhi*—spiritual competency. The word *Siddhi* is used in many senses in the *Gītā*. Its general meaning is the 'attainment of the end in view of an undertaking'. In occultism the word is used to indicate attainment of psychic powers. It is used to mean spiritual perfection as also the physical enlightened person.

Here it cannot mean ultimate perfection. For, further stages of development are given hereafter. What is meant is that one devoted to Svadharma reaches an advanced stage of development through the dedicated performance of it. But if the proper attitude of dedication is to be maintained towards work, intensive practice of meditation and worship is simultaneously necessary. Discharge of Svadharma then ceases to be mere work, but work-cum-intensive worship, integrated into a single discipline.

Whether this combination should be continued throughout the higher stages of development, or whether works are to be abandoned at an advanced stage in preference to an exclusive contemplative life, is a moot question on which commentators have differed. The Advaitins maintain that all works have to be abandoned at this stage. Where the *Gītā* passages seem to imply otherwise and to advocate a kind of spiritual perfection in which dedicated and disinterested work is given a place at all stages of spiritual life—this school painstakingly interprets such passages as favouring their doctrine of total cessation from works.

What we have tried to maintain in this study is that the *Gītā* gives a place for both these types—the pure *Sāṅkhya* who excludes all work and follows the way of the Absolute described as *Akṣara* and *Avyakta*, as also the *Yogin* who combines dedicated work and devotion, and devotes himself to the God of love. Both attain to the identical goal of spiritual illumination, which is described hereafter. Only the follower of the path of love has the help and support of the God of love who reveals His absolute nature to him in

the course of his spiritual maturity, while the follower of the Akṣara and Avyakta has to depend on his own strength. This topic has been discussed in Chapter 12.

7. *Vr.47-48*: These verses, which were easy for our ancients to understand, pose great difficulty for us today. So long as Varṇa was identified with the endogamous caste, and valid texts ascribed particular works to each caste (See verse 41—45 of this chapter), it was easy to find out one's Svadharma, and if one had a will, to perform it too. That a priest's son should be a priest, a soldier's son a soldier, a merchant's son a merchant, an agriculturist's son an agriculturist, a serf's son a serf—is an arrangement that could be practised to some extent in the old feudal society when educational opportunities were restricted, when there was no choice in following professions, when social contacts were limited, and when the validity of the system was accepted by the people in general. But today such an idea of Svadharma hereditarily determined, is impossible of practice. Society and professions have become competitive. The imparting of education without any restriction imposed by caste, has helped the shuffling of professional abilities among all members of society, setting aside hereditary factors. So it has become honourable for any one to follow any profession, and the determination of Svadharma based on birth as in a caste-based economy, has become impractical and impossible, and also undesirable. In a democratic society, the same kind of education is open to all, and every one is eligible, according to one's qualification and capacity, to positions of power, prestige and high income. In these days of national armies every able-bodied citizen has the eligibility to be recruited—he may even be conscripted—in the armed forces of the country. In such a milieu, if the Gītā idea of Svadharma is accepted as caste-based, as it was understood a few generations back, and as it used to be interpreted by old commentators, then it has become thoroughly outmoded and will be rejected by every section of society in India and outside.

But, as already pointed out, the wording of the Gītā about *Cāturvarṇya*, except as interpreted by old commentators, does not in itself mean endogamous castes, but the four psychological types. If this is accepted, Svadharma would mean only work that springs out of one's nature and therefore adapted to one's natural development. But how to recognise these types and how to provide

them with work suited to their nature—is a problem that cannot be solved. We have to leave work based on psychological type as an ideal arrangement in a more rationally organised society of the future. There is no other way today but to understand Svadharma as the duty devolving on oneself in society, inclusive of the profession one follows. If that is done well with God in view, and not merely for remuneration or with a worldly master in view, then one may be said to follow Svadharma.

A still greater difficulty is involved in understanding the next propositions: 1) To do one's *Svadharma*, even if it be without much merit, is better than well-performed *Paradharma* (or duty alien to oneself). (2) Do not leave a duty that is *sahajam* (born with you or natural with you), even if it involves some evil, because every enterprise in this world has some baneful feature about it, just as smoke is a universal feature of fire.

The difficulty consists in this that in a competitive society there is no way to determine what is *Paradharma* and what is *Svadharma*. When *Svadharma* was interpreted as the caste duty, hereditarily determined, the matter was over-simplified; but it violates the fundamental psychological principle on which the *Gītā* recognises the division into *Varṇas*. For, heredity is a very uncertain criterion of aptitude and competence. And besides, under the conditions in which life is organised today, free competition determines the work one is required to do. The only way left for individuals to follow the *Gītā* teaching is to make a self-estimate of one's own disposition, character and aptitude, and consciously select, as far as it is possible, a profession that is in agreement with one's nature as conceived in this scripture. But the conditions of competitive life are so compelling that one may find it very difficult to follow this rule, even if one can find out one's *Varṇa* by self-analysis. Under these circumstances, the idea contained in the 47th verse, that *Svadharma* should not be abandoned in favour of *Paradharma*, becomes otiose from a practical point of view, however true it might be in an ideal society.

These are the difficulties in interpreting the principle of *Svadharma* in terms of out-dated social ideologies. We can, however, find much relevancy in it if we adopt an entirely different meaning for the word *Svadharma* or one's own *Dharma* in this context.

In the light of the Gītā teaching, to work is the Svadharma or discipline contributing to one's evolution in the case of almost all men. To abstain from work under the cloak of some high-sounding philosophy or an ethical alibi of evil involved in all works, and thus to relapse into worklessness, as Arjuna wanted to do, is Paradharma—the duty of another i.e. of one who has overcome body-consciousness and established himself in the sense of being the uninvolved and unaffected Ātman. One may apparently be seen to be successfully following the life of workless asceticism externally, but in fact one would only be degenerating into Tamas or inertia in the long run.

Man being thus under the compulsion of work as duty, whatever it be, he rises above the meritorious and evil effects of duty, if he maintains the devotional attitude advocated by the Gītā—namely offering all the fruits of his action to the Lord, and being fully established in the attitude that he is a servant of God, discharging the duties He has entrusted him with.

Work being thus integral with the nature of man, he cannot give it up on the ground that it involves one in some actions one dislikes or has an adverse effect on others. What Arjuna sought to do in the field of battle was to give up his duty on such a plea and take to workless asceticism. He fortunately had a friend and adviser in Kṛṣṇa to disabuse him of this delusion and make him understand that what he egotistically refused to do, he would be compelled to undertake by the force of Nature.

It is not that the Gītā wants one to stick on to some hereditary work, fearing that if he takes to some other kind of work, he will be following Paradharma. For, even hereditary work, if it does not suit one's disposition, becomes Paradharma. If by self-analysis or the advice of a wise teacher, a particular work is not found to be suited to one's evolution, it should be changed by a conscientious person who has a high spiritual ideal. But unfortunately most men are for works that will fetch them the highest remuneration and not for what will contribute to their spiritual advancement.

Besides, professions too are not to be had according to one's choice. Many of the professions today are so technical that it requires years of preparation, and changing them will be practically

impossible. A still more complicating factor is that in a democratic State certain duties like taking up arms for the defence of the country become every man's duty. So also democratic processes like forming parties, formation of governments, the electioneering processes etc., are matters of universal concern, thus making a political orientation of society inevitable. The spread of universal education, the technical nature of works, and the acceptance of democratic rights for all—these and several features of modern life have made a simple hereditary determination of Svadharma absurd. But the psychological truth contained in the conception of Svadharma stands for all time.

Under the existing circumstances any duty that one is called to, has to be accepted as Svadharma, with freedom to change it if it is found to be a 'Paradharmā' (not according to one's nature).

8. Vrs. 49-50: In verse 46, it was declared that man attains to *Siddhi*, by adoring the Supreme Being with his Svadharma. What sort of '*Siddhi*' or perfection is it? It can only mean an advanced state of spiritual competency (cf. Note 6), and not final perfection. Now in verse 50 he is again spoken of as attaining '*Siddhi*', which is described in verse 49 as *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, which we have translated as supreme 'perfection of transcendence of work'. *Naiṣkarmya* or worklessness, is not the physical inactivity but the recognition of oneself as the Ātman who is unaffected and uninvolved in the movements of the body-mind. This state is attained by *Samnyāsa* which is essentially the abandonment of the fruits of action and the sense of agency. Some may give up all work externally also. Such a state is attained by an aspirant who has reached the earlier *Siddhi* described in verse 46, consisting in purity of mind and powerful aspiration gained through the grace of God, which comes to one adoring Him for long with the performance of his Svadharma in a dedicated manner. This second *Siddhi* of *Naiṣkarmya* also does not seem to be the end. So it is said in Vrs. 49-50 and those succeeding how one, who is established in this *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, attains to 'Brahman' which attainment is declared as the highest consummation of knowledge—*niṣṭhā Jñānasya yā parā*. In the succeeding verses the way to that consummation is given. Thus it must be noted that the *Gītā* speaks of three types of *Siddhi* as stages of perfection.

The first is purity of mind and strong aspiration, the second *naiṣkarmya-siddhi* here described and the final consisting in the perfection of Jñāna-bhakti that will be described hereafter.

9. *Ūr.51-55*: After the attainment of the second Siddhi, the disciplines one should adopt and the course of one's development are stated in these verses. The description given is of an introvert and ascetic living in solitude absorbed in meditation, having nothing to do with the outside world or with any work. He is workless mentally and physically. By this discipline he attains to what is called here *Brahma-bhūyam* — Brahman-becoming. That even this is not the final state of perfection but only the stepping stone to it, is clear from the verses which follow describing the final state of spiritual attainment.

So *Brahma-bhūyam* is the third stage of perfection or Siddhi, the others being Siddhi resulting from the discharge of Svadharma in a dedicated manner, and the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* or realisation that one is not the body but the Ātman above all change.

Thus *Brahma-bhūyam* is the third Siddhi. It is the same as what is spoken of as *Brāhmī-sthiti* in Ch. 2.72. It occurs also in Ch. 14.26. A detailed note on the significance of the expression is given on that verse as Note 6 of Chapter 14. Reference may be made to that Note, as it deals with the present context also.

A person who has reached the state of *Brahma-bhūyam* has not attained to the spiritual summit. His attainment is described in verse 54 as "Tranquil in spirit, free from grief and passions and regarding all beings as alike." This state of tranquillity is also the state of a *Sthita-prajña*—one of steady wisdom described at the close of Chapter 2. He next passes on to the last stage of spiritual perfection consisting in the attainment of transcendent devotion (*Parām Bhaktim*). It is not the ordinary devotion based on the Guṇas of Prakṛti, but what is called in the Bhāgavata as *Nirguṇa-Bhakti*—spontaneous love of the Lord stimulated not by any body-based passions but by the direct attraction of the Lord as of iron by the magnet. Here Bhakti and Jñāna go together, they being like the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. So it is said "By Bhakti he knows Me—both My extent and My essence." His 'extent' is his transcendence (*Paratva*) and

his 'essence' is love (*Saulabhya*). And loving and knowing Him most intimately, the Jīva enters into the Divine Life—which is the acme of spiritual attainment. The Gītā stops there and does not split hairs, unlike the Ācharyas discussing the ontological significance of an attainment that defies all intellectual categories. Whether in this final attainment the Jīva becomes one with the Supreme Being as a river becomes one with the ocean, or whether the Jīva retains a modicum of individuality or refined personality so as to practise eternal love and service of the Divine—are moot points on which theologians and philosophers have argued and speculated for centuries without coming to any agreed solution. The one clear pronouncement that the Gītā makes on this moot question is: "A part of Mine has become the eternal Jīva in the sphere of Jīvas" (15.7). So it is better to maintain that the Jīva can become one with Him, as a part can become one with the whole, or if the Jīva prefers, the Jīva can maintain his Jīvahood absorbed in the service of the Lord.

10. *Vr.56-62*: Till the end of the previous verse 55, the ideal of an absolute contemplative, who, abandoning all works, has retired into solitude, and is engaged in meditation leading to illumination is described. Immediately after, in verse 56, the text seeks to describe an entirely different type of aspirant who is fully engaged in work—of one who performs 'every kind of work always'. It will be highly arbitrary to take it as a continuation of the same topic or to say that it refers to the earliest Siddhi of attaining purity through dedicated work. It has to be interpreted as the beginning of a new topic, namely, the spiritual progress of those who continue to do work by way of service of the Lord as both the way to salvation, and the end to be achieved through it.

From the start itself the Gītā has divided aspirants into two types—the Sāṃkhyas who abandon all work and follow a life of contemplation, and the Yogins who continue to work as a service of the Lord in absolute surrender of fruits of works and agency to Him. Do they represent two independent paths, or is the latter only the preparatory stage for gaining competency for the former? The Kevalādvaita commentaries of the Gītā generally hold that the second alternative is the correct interpretation. Some qualified aspirants may abandon all work from the beginning itself, and the others may do so when they come to a certain maturity through

performance of Svadharma as dedicated works, which is called Siddhi in verse 46 of this chapter. The subsequent discipline of introspection and worklessness has been described in verses 51-55, and that topic closes with verse 55 and a new topic begins with the next verse. For, the succeeding verses deal with aspirants engaged in work. That there is such a division of the subject here is accepted even by a great Advaitic commentator like Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

The discipline and spiritual progress of the Yogins, who combine dedicated work and deep devotion throughout their spiritual life is next taken up from verse 55. That kind of discipline was described earlier in Chapter II from Verse 39 onward, in Chapter III from verse 3 onward and in Chapter XII. Aspirants of this type who have absolute faith and resignation to the Lord, are spoken of here as 'doing all kinds of work', but attaining to the eternal state by 'My grace'. The operation of this divine grace is the most important factor in the life of such devotees. In verse 62 the Lord tells them: 'Seek refuge in Him alone with all your being, with all love. By His grace you will attain the eternal state, the highest peace.' This factor of grace in the case of such a devotee is emphasised in several passages. It is stated: "I become their uplifter from the ocean of recurring death." (12.7); "Of those who devote themselves to Me entirely without deviation, I shall preserve what they have (their worldly interests) and secure them what they have not, that is 'salvation.'" (9.22); "For those who are ever devoted to Me and worship Me with love, I bestow that illumination of intelligence by which they come to Me. Out of compassion for them, I destroy in them the darkness of ignorance by My presence in their innermost core as the shining lamp of wisdom" (10.10-11); "Of those who surrender all their actions to Me and meditate on Me with exclusive devotion, soon shall I be their uplifter from the ocean of death—of them whose minds are absorbed in Me" (12.6-7) etc. Above all there is the concluding verse of the Gītā: "Abandoning all other Dharma (rites and practices) seek shelter in Me alone. I shall release you from the hold of sin. Do not grieve." (18-66). The verse under comment also conveys the same idea. It says: "Though performing every kind of work always, he who has taken refuge in Me shall, by My grace, attain to the eternal and indestructible state of Mokṣa."

From this it is clear that the Gītā accommodates within its teaching a type of aspirants who practise devotion to the God of Love, combining work with meditation till the end, first as means for realisation and afterward as its consummation. Though they may be practising devotional disciplines, they depend for salvation not on their efforts but on divine grace got through total self-surrender as declared in Gītā verse 18.66.

It is in all respects an independent path in itself, in which divine grace plays the most important part. The followers of this path also attain to that Divine state which the work-renouncing Sāṃkhyas (Sāṃnyāsins) are said to attain in verse 55 of this chapter.

In olden days those belonging to monastic Orders had to abandon works of all kinds, and so the work-abandoning aspirants spoken of here, used to be Sāṃnyāsins only. The aspirants belonging to the second category—the Yogins who combine work with devotion—were necessarily householders. But in the modern age after the advent of Swami Vivekananda, the conception of Sāṃnyāsa has changed. A member of an Order of Sāṃnyāsins, according to Swami Vivekananda, can also do works, provided they are not for one's own purpose or profit, but for *Lokasaṃgraha*—the good of the society or rather the service of God in man. Thus this category of aspirants who do not abandon all works, about whom the Gītā speaks from verse 56 onwards, can include such Sāṃnyāsins also. The old conception of Sāṃnyāsa, according to which man abandons all works, has necessarily got to be confined to a very small circle of people who have largely overcome body-consciousness and about whom for that reason it can no longer be said: "Duties which your natural tendencies have imposed upon you, but which out of delusion you refuse to do, even that you will have to perform by the compulsion of Nature" (18-6). If Sāṃnyāsa on the other hand is to be a state of life applicable to a larger circle of people, it has to include works of a dedicated nature also among its disciplines.

Thus the teaching of the Gītā, while it accepts the doctrine of workless Sāṃnyāsa leading to illumination for the few, also accepts, as equally valid and independent, the path of Bhakti combined with dedicated work, enlightenment being an accompaniment of it by the grace of God, which He bestows on all de-

voted servants of His. The *Bhāgavata* puts this uniqueness of higher Bhakti very effectively when it says that just like a ball of rice eaten satisfies hunger, brings strength and gives joy, all together, Bhakti gives illumination, bliss and liberation at one stroke. It is not a mere handmaid of any other discipline.

In fact in the Gītā, Bhakti and Jñāna are one and the same at their highest reaches, each perfecting the other. So it is said in 18.35, "By Bhakti he comes to know Me (*abhi-jānāti*)—both My extent and My essence"; and again in 18.68 he speaks of this doctrine of love and self-surrender, which forms the essence of Bhakti that He taught in the earlier verses, as "*Iti te jñānam ākhyātām*—thus have I imparted to you that profound wisdom."

11. *Vr.* 63: The conclusion of this verse, which is also the near conclusion of the whole teaching, is remarkable for the freedom that the teacher gives the disciple in the statement, "Reflecting over this whole teaching, do as you think fit." An enlightened teacher never imposes any teaching on a worthy disciple.

12. *Vrs.* 64-66: The essence of the Gītā teaching is clinched in the verses 65 and 66. While the Gītā teaching has a place for the renunciation of all actions by aspirants who have attained to purity of mind, its main thrust is to recommend the renunciation not of works but of their fruits and the sense of agency. In verse 66 an aspirant is asked to abandon all Dharma. Dharma is interpreted by some schools of thought as Karmas. If by Karma is meant all Vedic ritualism and ego-centred work for selfish gains, the equation of Dharma with Karma is all right. But it cannot be of works done as pure acts of devotion and service. For the immediately previous verse says: "Let your mind be engrossed in Me. Be resigned to Me. Offer worship to Me." etc. So works of the nature of Bhakti discipline should always be performed. These disciplines are in the words of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*—*Śravaṇam* (hearing about God), *Kīrtanam* (chanting His name and praises), *Smaraṇam* (remembering Him through repetition of the Name etc.), *Pādasevanam* (performing all duties as His service), *Arcanam* (worship of Him in images), *Vandanam* (saluting Him in all beings), *Dāsyam* (cultivating the attitude of a servant of His), *Sakhyam* (feeling the intimacy of comradeship with Him), and *Ātmanivedanam* (self-dedication to Him).

Even in the performance of these devotional activities, there is a form of renunciation to be practised. There is a tendency among spiritual aspirants to feel that they have done so much of Sādhana and nothing has happened or that they are entitled to the Lord's grace because they have done so much of spiritual practices. There is nothing so stupid and unspiritual as this kind of mentality. The Infinite Being cannot be purchased for any price of limited commodities. A true aspirant abandons the fruits of all his Sādhana to Him. The Lord's grace is bestowed according to His will; man's duty is only to pray for it and wait in patience. He is to have the abiding faith that "The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, revolving these by his mysterious power Māyā, as one would do objects mounted on a machine" (18-61). His are the fruits and His the agency. The surrender of the fruits and the sense of agency in regard to all one's spiritual practices even, besides the abandonment of all non-spiritual activities, is included in the idea of giving up all Dharma. And with this attitude of mind, an aspirant must abide in the faith that the Lord is his only support, his only redeemer, the only determiner of his destiny.

According to Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, this surrender takes three forms determined by the maturity of Sādhana.

1. *Tasyaivāham mamaivāsau sa evāham iti tridhā !
bhagavac-charaṇatvam syād sādhanābhyāsa pākataḥ ||*

That is: first, there is the attitude 'I am His', second is the attitude 'He is mine', and third, there is the experience 'He is I'. Surrender takes these three forms according to one's spiritual maturity.

In explanation of these, he quotes as the example of the first attitude:

*Satyapi bhedāpagame nātha tavāham na māmakīnastvam
sāmudro hi taraṅgaḥ kva ca na sāmudro hi tārangaḥ*

That is, "When the sense of difference subsides, I am, O Lord, Thy appendage, and not You mine. It is the wave that belongs to the ocean, and never the ocean to the wave."

2. The second stage is represented by the attitude:

*Hastam utkṣīpya yātosī Balakṛṣṇa! kimadbhutam
Hṛdayād yadi niryāsi pavruṣaṁ gaṇayāmi te*

That is, "Well, Kṛṣṇa, Thou art forcibly snatching Thyself away from me physically. How strange! I shall only praise Thy valour if Thou art able to extricate Thyself out of my heart also." Here the devotee's sense of 'myness' with regard to the Lord is so great that he feels that He can never separate Himself from him (the devotee).

3. The third and the highest stage of surrender is represented by the realisation embodied in the verse addressed by Yama to his emissaries in the Viṣṇupurāṇa.

*Sakalam idāmiham ca vāsudevaḥ paramapūmān paramesvaraḥ
sa ekaḥ /
iti matiracalā bhavatyānante hṛdayagate vraja tān vihāya dūrāt!|*

"Do not approach those in whom has arisen the firm conviction that all that exists is Vāsudeva, the one Supreme Lord and Master of all, dwelling within the heart." Here the 'I' has disappeared in the 'He', and there is only He.

One who resorts to Him absolutely. He offers to deliver from all sins. Sins must be understood in a comprehensive sense, namely the effects of all Karma, present and past, good and bad, which lead to repeated births and deaths. Even the effects of good Karma can be called 'sin', as they also lead to repeated births and deaths. In other words, the Lord promises to bestow His grace, and to light in one's heart the lamp of wisdom that removes the darkness of Ignorance, which is the cause of all sin. Individual sins may be absolved by atonements (*prāyascitta*) but sins or sinful tendency can be effaced only by *Haritoṣaṇam*—by securing the grace of the Lord.

13. *Vrs.67-71*: Several of these verses of the Gītā may cause surprise in the minds of many modern readers, because in contrast to the modern idea of giving wide publicity to a spiritual message, the Gītā is prohibiting the preaching of it to persons who do not practise austere living, who have no devotion and no spirit of

service. Its teaching should be confined to devotees of God. The idea behind this prohibition is that perverse people will misinterpret and abuse many of these great teachings to suit their own nefarious purposes. For example, take a teaching contained in 2.10, "He who thinks the self can be a slayer and who thinks it can be the slain—both have no right knowledge. For the self does not slay, nor is the self slain." This can be used by a murderer to justify his anti-social act. The teaching that all beings are like objects mounted on a wheel which the Lord is turning, may be used to justify fatalism, lethargy and anti-social acts. Man can shift the moral responsibility for his actions to God, and thus make a noble teaching ridiculous. People with anti-social tendencies can easily misunderstand and misapply these doctrines. So it should be imparted only to genuine spiritual seekers with sound moral foundations. While accepting the validity of such objection, Gītā lovers will be for preaching this doctrine to a wide circle, justifying their act on the ground that all who come voluntarily to hear or study this text and its exposition, have a spiritual bent of mind, actual or potential, in them.

It is also noteworthy that Kṛṣṇa thinks that preaching of the Gītā to deserving persons is doing the highest form of adoration of Him, a form of service that is most pleasing to Him. He calls the study of the Gītā and its teaching, which is only an extension of study, as Jñāna-yajña, sacrifice of Knowledge. It is a mental form of sacrifice, as contrasted with the ritualistic.

14. *Vr.73* : The restoration of Smṛti or memory spoken of here is the consciousness of one's being the Immortal Atman and not the perishable body-mind. Arjuna's initial shrinking from the discharge of his duty is the result of the feeling that all the persons arrayed for battle, ready to cause mutual destruction, are his own kith and kin. The identification of man with the perishable body-mind in place of the immortal Spirit is the root cause of this delusion and dereliction of duty. Kṛṣṇa's instruction now restores to him consciousness of man being the Immortal Spirit.

END

APPENDIX 1

The Sāṃkhya and the Bhagavad Gita

THE Gītā is accepted by all the great Ācāryas of India as one of the three source books (*Prasthāna-traya*) of the Vedānta philosophy. But it will surprise a reader to note that while the Gītā refers to its thought as Sāṃkhya five times (cf. II 39; III 3; V 4-5; XIII 24; and XVIII 13), it speaks of itself as Vedānta only once (cf. XV 15). The surprise arises from two perceptions. First, by Sāṃkhya we usually understand the Darśana or philosophy of that name, included in the six Darśanas or systems of Indian philosophy, and based on Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṃkhya Kārika. The system as given there is atheistic and it is devastatingly criticised by the great Vedāntic Ācāryas including Śāṅkara, in their commentaries on the Vedānta Sūtras. Next, even while it is so, we find the term Sāṃkhya frequently occurring in the Gītā, which is admittedly a great Vedāntic text.

This discrepancy seems to be noticed to some extent at least by Śāṅkara who, while commenting on *eṣā te abhikhitā Sāṃkhye* (cf. II 39), interprets the word Sāṃkhya as *paramārtha vastu viṣaye* i.e., 'in regard to the Supreme Truth'. In other words, he takes it to mean only as 'metaphysical reality' and not as a reference to Īśvarakṛṣṇa's or Kapila's system of thought. The very context compels him to do so. But when he comments on *procyate guṇa sāmkyāne* i.e. 'is said in the science of enumeration of Guṇas' (cf. XVIII 19), he interprets *guṇasāmkyāna* as a reference to the system of Kapila, meaning the classical Sāṃkhya of the Kārika, which is atheistic. Realising the inconsistency of it, perhaps, he immediately says: "This Śāstra is a valid source of knowledge about the constituents (Guṇas) and the Jīvas who experience. Though it contradicts in respect of the non-duality of the metaphysically real or Brahman, the followers of Kapila are adepts as regards constituents and their operation." It is also to be noted that the Ācārya is not at all puzzled when Kṛṣṇa in Vibhūti Yoga, describes Himself to be the Muni Kapila among Siddhas (perfect ones). If Kapila were the atheistic philosopher referred to in the com-

ment on XVIII. 19, how does Kṛṣṇa call him 'a perfect one' (Siddha)?

This confusion arises out of a lack of historical perspective. Kapila, unless the account of him given in the Bhāgavata is taken as history, is a very shadowy figure. The Svetaśvatara Upaniṣad (5.2) refers to a Ṛṣi Kapila. The reference, in that context, may be to the 'golden coloured one', the Hiranya-garbha. It is often interpreted so by commentators. No one knows what exactly Kapila taught, as he has left no work behind him. *Sāṃkhya-pravacanasūtra* attributed to him must have originated so late as the 15th century A.D., as we do not find any writer of an earlier date referring to it. The Sāṃkhya tradition is said to have been transmitted by Kapila to Āsuri, by him to Pañcasikha and by him to others afterwards. The earliest systematic account of the teachings of Sāṃkhya philosophy is to be got only in the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, whose date is supposed to be between the first half of the second century A.D. and the 5th century A.D. *Śaṣṭi-tantra*, a supposed earlier work, is not now extant. For the great Vedāntic Ācāryas, therefore, Sāṃkhya Philosophy meant the system as formulated in the Sāṃkhya Kārikā. The philosophy expounded therein is characterised by its pluralistic dualism, its absolute realism, its thorough rationalism and its pronounced atheism, while being at the same time a gospel of spiritual redemption.

It is only in our times, thanks to the valuable research work of scholars both Indian and western, that the historical background of the Sāṃkhya system has been clarified. As a consequence we can have an understanding of why the Gītā calls its teachings Sāṃkhya. The fact is that at the time when the Upaniṣads and the Gītā came into existence, there was practically no hard and fast difference between the Sāṃkhya and the Vedānta as in later classical times. Many of what are considered the special features of the Sāṃkhya philosophy like the concepts of the Puruṣa, of Prakṛti, of the three Guṇas, of different categories being evolved out of Prakṛti with their corresponding counterparts in the human personality, of the effect subsisting in the cause, of the attainment of freedom by the Puruṣa from the hold of Prakṛti, etc., are all in some form ideologies of the Upaniṣads

too. Some of the Upaniṣads use the words Sāṃkhya and Vedānta indiscriminately to denote their teachings. Thus the Śvetāśvatara refers in one place (cf. 6. 12) to the Supreme Truth as *Sāṃkhya-yogādhī-gamyam*—i.e., 'What can be attained through Sāṃkhya and Yoga.' And a few lines after (cf. 6. 22) it speaks of that Supreme Truth as *Vedānta pracoditam paramam guhyam*—'the highest mysticism taught in the Vedānta.'

This tendency of making no hard and fast distinction between Sāṃkhya and Vedānta is seen in a still more marked degree in the Gītā. As we have mentioned already, there is only one reference to the term Vedānta in the Gītā, and that is when the Lord calls Himself Vedāntakṛt or the maker of the Vedānta (cf. XV. 15). As against this, there are five places where He calls His teachings as Sāṃkhya and Yoga—'discriminative wisdom and non-attached action.' The theory of the three Guṇas and the part they play in life by their permutations and combinations are described perhaps in greater detail in the Gītā, chapter fourteen onwards, than in any Sāṃkhyan text proper. The distinction between Puruṣa and Prakṛti is discussed in chapter thirteen. But all this is done from the theistic point of view, and the supremacy of Īśvara over Puruṣa and Prakṛti is maintained all through.

In the Mahābhārata too, in the Mokṣa-Dharma section of its Śānti-parva, the Sāṃkhya is not treated as a hostile system subject to the philosophic criticism, which it receives later at the hands of Vedāntic Ācāryas. The Sāṃkhyans are spoken of therein with great respect as philosophers and believers in the doctrine of the Ātman. They are also described as theists accepting a Supreme Being under whose control the individual Puruṣas and Nature function. He is the 26th principle, the Puruṣottama (Īśvara), in addition to the twentyfour categories evolved out of Prakṛti and the Puruṣa the 25th, recognised by classical Sāṃkhya. And the Puruṣa, though multiple in bondage, becomes one with Īśvara in salvation.

How then the wide gulf of difference between the Sāṃkhya and the Vedānta came about in later times is difficult to trace, because of the absence of any authentic linking literature between the Upaniṣadic and the Gītā Sāṃkhya with the

classical Sāṃkhya of Īśvarakṛṣṇa. The Sāṃkhya philosophy, is described as having come from Kapila, through Āruṇi Pañcasīkha, Asita-Devala and Varṣṇaganya to the times when Īśvarakṛṣṇa wrote his Sāṃkhya Kārika, which is plainly atheistic, though propounding a spiritual doctrine. No literature produced by any of these early Sāṃkhya teachers, has, however, come down to us, though Īśvarakṛṣṇa claims that he is giving a summary of an extensive literature on the philosophy called Saṣṭi Tantra. No doubt we hear of what must have been a voluminous Sāṃkhya work called by that name and consisting, according to some tradition, of sixty thousand verses, but no such text is now available. Nor does Mahābhārata Śānti-parva, which refers to all philosophers and philosophies known in the pre-classical times, make any mention of such a text. Probably it might not have been one book, but the name for a collection of books, of which the important ones were the product of the Sāṃkhya teachers mentioned before.

Whatever that be, from some discourses found in the Śānti-parva of the Mahābhārata, there is evidence to show that it was with Pañcasīkha that the Sāṃkhya began to take an atheistic turn. Pañcasīkha accepts a soul or a Puruṣa to account for the sense of a continuing individuality, but the soul is not itself a conscious entity. Consciousness, according to him, is a property that comes into existence when the Puruṣa comes into a conglomerated association with the body-mind and Cetana (psychic efficiency), which are all parts of Avyakta or Prakṛti, the ultimate ground of the objective world. Consciousness, being thus a product of the integration of the Puruṣa with a certain aspect of the Avyakta as body-mind, it ceases to exist when this integration ceases at death. Man suffers because he identifies the Puruṣa with this conglomeration of body-mind and considers that conglomeration to be his self. Mukti is got when this identification ceases, but consciousness also ceases with it. But the state of Mukti is not one of ultimate destruction nor of ultimate reality. It is indeterminate and indefinable. It cannot definitely be described as a state of consciousness, as consciousness is not an essential characteristic of the Puruṣa. In bringing about these agglomerations of Avyakta known as

body-mind, or in bringing about the identification of the Puruṣa with such agglomerations, or in releasing him, there is no place for a Puruṣottama, a God.

The influence of such thinkers gradually drifted the Sāṃkhya, as represented in the Gītā and the Mokṣa-Dharma of the Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata, away from its original moorings into the Sāṃkhya of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṃkhya Kārika, which is characterised by absolute realism, atheism and pluralism. Thus Sāṃkhya, which was one with Vedānta in early times, became the *Pradhana-malla*, the chief opponent, for the Vedāntic Ācāryas of classical times to combat with and refute.

The causes for this drifting apart of Sāṃkhya from Vedānta can only be a matter of guess work. The followers of the Veda always relied on the Vedic text. Not only the ritualists, but also the Vedic philosophers, who came to be called Vedāntins, clung to the Upaniṣadic section of the Vedas to provide them with data to formulate a philosophy of life. Reasoning has an important place in it no doubt, but it is always subject to the authority of the Vedantic texts. It is natural that all thinkers would not agree with this outlook which relies on textual authority, and some of them at least would gradually drift more and more to reliance on reasoning. This must have happened among Indian thinkers in classical times, and Sāṃkhya, 'the pursuit of wisdom,' must have tilted increasingly towards reasoning while continuing to give a lip-allegiance to Vedic authority. The Sāṃkhya thinkers, however, at no time rejected Vedic authority openly and therefore their system continued to be regarded as orthodox and Āstika, in spite of their frank atheism.

At all times in the history of thought, there have been sets of thinkers who felt hesitant to accept an ultimate spiritual principle, which is ordinarily designated by the term God or Īśvara. They have considered Nature as self-explanatory, and brushed aside the idea of a God, who is necessarily unknown, as a gratuitous assumption, serving absolutely no purpose in their world view. But unlike the pure materialists of ancient and modern times, the Sāṃkhyas considered that the functioning of Nature is purposive, indicating the presence of a principle of intelligence somewhere, to serve

whose purpose Nature is functioning. They found the purpose-giving principle in the Puruṣa, the individual soul, whose imaginary association with aspects of Prakṛti gives direction to the inherently dynamic Prakṛti in such a way as to subserve the purpose of that Puruṣa. Prakṛti is functioning in order to provide experience to the Puruṣa, until he sees through its wiles, develops complete detachment from it, and gains liberation through the discriminative wisdom. Thus they developed a method of striving for spirituality without a God and scriptural authority.

In the development of such a non-theological philosophy of life with a spiritual import and an emphasis on rationalism, the Sāṃkhyan thinkers might have been influenced by the intellectual milieu brought about by Buddhism, which accepted neither a God nor an individual soul, but none the less presented a highly spiritual pattern of life. There are some people who cannot stand the idea of God, as there are others who swear by Him. It was so then, and it is so today also.

The Sāṃkhya has continued to develop even after Iśvarakṛṣṇa's time and re-capture the theistic spirit, especially in the commentary of Vijñāna-bhikṣu (16th century) on *Sāṃkhya-pravacana-sūtras* attributed to Kapila himself. But the atheistic bent given to it by the Sāṃkhya Karika of Iśvarakṛṣṇa and the acceptance of this as the outlook of that system by the great classical Ācāryas of Vedānta like Bādarāyaṇa and Śaṅkara, have for ever drawn the picture of the Sāṃkhya as an atheistic and pluralistic doctrine in the minds of students of Indian philosophy.

APPENDIX II

In the Bhagavad Gītā text there are several words of technical importance, whose sense seems to be very fluid, making it very difficult to understand the exact meaning meant. We have selected in the following section a few such words to illustrate the point and to draw the attention of careful readers of the Gītā to this feature of the Text.

BRAHMAN, BRAHMA AND BRAHMĀ

To a student of Vedantic literature today, these words forming the neutral and masculine formations of the same word, convey definite meanings. Brahman and Brahma denote the Supreme Being (the Absolute), and Brahmā is the creator (Demiurge), one of the Trinity. But a student of the Gītā will find that it is not so simple as that. The word is used in diverse senses in the Gītā text, and ascertaining the meaning of it is complicated by the fact that Brahman and Brahmā (both neuter) cannot be distinguished from the creator Brahmā (masculine) except in the nominative and accusative cases, and that in compound words they cannot be distinguished at all.

Etymologically Brahma is derived from the root 'brh' to grow. Some modern scholars conclude from a study of the use of the term in early Vedic literature that originally it conveyed the sense of 'power'—power inherent in the Mantras of the Veda. So the Veda itself came to be called Brahma, as we find in the Gītā verse 3.15 *Karma brahmodbhavam viddhi, brahmā 'kṣara-samudbhavam* (rituals have originated from the Veda or Brahma, and Brahma i.e. the Veda from the Imperishable). Again it seems to be used in the same sense in 4.32—"*Evam bahuvīdhā yajñā vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe* (many such sacrifices are set forth in the 'entrance' of Brahma i.e. the Veda.)

It is used as Eternal Being, as Jīva, as Prakṛti and even as renunciation in other places. In the verse 4.31 that occurs immediately before the above one (4.32), the word Brahman is used in the sense of Eternal Being: *Yajña-śiṣṭāmṛta bhujo yānti Brahma sanātanam* (those who partake of the

nectar, the sacramental remnants of sacrifice, attain to the Eternal Brahman). In this sense of the Eternal or Supreme Being, the word is used in many places. Verse 5:6 says: *Yoga-yukto munir, Brahmā nacireṇ'ādhigacchati* (the sage accomplished in Yoga attains Brahman in no long time). But Śaṅkara interprets the word Brahman here as 'renunciation', as it is a means for attaining Brahman. He has to give such a strained interpretation, because according to him *Jñāna* alone constitutes the direct means to lead an aspirant to Brahman and renunciation is an important means to attain that *Jñāna*. This will help one understand the very curiously ambiguous use made of the word in the Gītā.

In 7.29: *Te Brahmā tad viduḥ kṛtsnam* (they know Brahma in entirety), the word is used to denote the Supreme Being. A clear use of it as the Supreme Being is found also in verse 10.12: *Param Brahmā param dhāma* (Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode). It will be noted here that 'param', supreme, is used to qualify Brahma, as 'kṛtsnam' is used in the earlier passage. This shows that the Gītā itself is aware that the word Brahmā is used in many senses.

In answer to the question (8.1): *Kim tad Brahma* (what is that Brahma?), it is answered: *Akṣaram Brahma paramam* (Supreme Brahman is the Imperishable). Though the reference seems to be to the Supreme Being only, Rāmānuja interprets Brahma here as the true self (Kṣetrajñā) i.e. Jivas conceived universally. For him the descriptive epithet *Akṣara* attached to the expression, gives it this meaning.

In 4.24 the word Brahma is used in a very ambiguous way, suggesting many meanings. The verse is "*Brahmārpanam brahmakarma samādhinaḥ*" By identifying all parts of sacrifice with Brahma, that word is given the meaning of sacrifice. The idea that Brahma is the All, is also suggested i.e. that the Supreme Being is not only transcendent but immanent in everything.

In verse 5-19, *Nirdoṣam hi samam Brahma, tasmād Brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ* (Brahma is unsullied and pure; therefore the seers of sameness are said to be established in Brahmā), the word Brahma means the Supreme Being. Some modern interpreters like Minor and Zaehner, however, take the words

'established in Brahma' as meaning the state of 'liberated consciousness' or the 'fixed still state of Brahman'. In their predilection to read into the Gītā a kind of personalistic theism, they make a distinction between Brahman and the consciousness of the liberated one and contend that the general use of the word Brahman in the Gītā is to indicate the latter. Monistic Vedānta, however, does not make a distinction between Brahman and the consciousness of the liberated. They are identical according to them. Rāmānuja, who is not Advaitic, explains the passage merely as the 'freedom from the strain of Samsāra.'

In 6.38 occurs the expression, "*Vimūḍho Brahmanāḥ pathi*" (lost in the path of Brahma) when the question is asked, "Does one who is unsuccessful in the path of Brahma lose both this world and the hereafter?" The question is asked in the context of the practice of Astāṅga Yoga for gaining absolute concentration of mind. It is not likely that Brahman, the Impersonal Absolute of the Vedānta, is meant here. It can only mean 'the spiritual path and goal' in a general sense. So this seems to be another sense of the word Brahman in the Gītā.

In 8.16 and 8.17 the word Brahma is used in such expressions as "*Ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ*" (from the world of Brahmā to the earthly sphere), and "*Ahaḥ yad Brahmaṇo viduḥ*" (what is known as Brahmā's day)," the word is used in the sense of Brahmā the creator, one of the Trinity, who is only an off-shoot of Viṣṇu. In verse 11.37 occurs the expression "*Brahmaṇo py'ādikartre*" (the originator of even Brahmā). The expression Brahma here can refer to either the masculine Brahmā or the neuter Brahman, as these two words can be distinguished only in the nominative and accusative. In the former case the reference will be to the creator Brahmā. There are, however, modern interpreters like Zaehner who interpret it as 'Impersonal Brahman', as they want to uphold the doctrine that the Impersonal is subordinate to the personal represented by Kṛṣṇa. They support this view by a quotation from the Gītā itself: "*Brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham* (I, Kṛṣṇa, am the foundation of Brahmā even 14.27)." For a detailed discussion of this obscure passage see the Notes on pp. 374-377. In 11.15 it is clearly used for

creator Brahmā in the expression—“*Brahmāṇam īdam kama-lasanastham.*”

In 17.23 occurs the expression, “*Om Tat Sat iti nirdeśo Brahmagas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ*” (Om, Tat, Sat—these three are the symbolic designations of Brahma). Here Brahma can very well mean the Supreme Being. But Rāmānuja interprets it as Veda, as in 3.15, which has already been considered.

In verse 13.12 there is the expression, “*Anādimatparam Brahma.*” The interpretation Śankara gives is: Brahman who is Anādi (beginningless) and Param (supreme). *Mat* is taken as a meaningless suffix used for metrical purposes only. He also gives an alternative interpretation, taking the expression as “*Anādi and Matparam*”, meaning thereby that Brahman is supreme, and I, Vāsudeva is Brahman’s *Para* or Pre-eminent Power. But Rāmānuja reads quite a different meaning. He splits the word as *Anādi and matparam Brahmā*, and interprets the expression as “Brahma or Jīva who is without an origin and dependent on Me, Vāsudeva.” Thus Brahma here means for him Jīva.

In Verse 13.30 it is said that when one perceives “the manifold as centred in the One etc.” he attains to Brahmā (*Brahma sampadyate tadā*). Here the word can mean Brahman, the Impersonal Absolute, in the Upaniṣadic sense. But the modern interpreters like Zaener and Minor refuse to accept that Gītā propounds the idea of an Absolute as understood in Advaita Vedānta. So Zaener interprets “*Brahma sampadyate*” as meaning the same as *Brahma-bhūta* in 5.24, and attributes to it the Buddhist sense of “entering a form of existence which is unconditioned by space, time and causation, the very flavour of Nirvāṇa.” Minor remarks about it “Presumably as used regularly in the Gītā for Kṛṣṇa’s state of consciousness.”

The word Brahma is used in the sense of Prakṛti, Nature, in 14.3 and 14.7. The verses run—“*Mama yoniḥ mahat Brahma* (The great Brahma, Nature, is my womb)”, and “*Teṣām brahma mahat yoniḥ* (Of them i.e. of all beings, Brahma or Nature is the great womb or source). Some modern interpreters are of the view that Brahma is used in

the sense of Prakṛti or Nature even in 3.15—“*Karma brahmodbhavam viddhi* (know that Karma or action is born of Brahma or Nature)”. The traditional interpretation of the word, as already given earlier, is Veda, which is the basis and therefore the origin of all ritualistic work. It can as well mean Nature, which is the source of all activity.

In 18-50, towards the close of the Gītā, in order to indicate the Supreme Being, the Gītā says: “*Siddhim paraptō yathā Brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me*—hear from Me how one who has gained perfection in transcendence of work (*naiṣkarmya-siddhiḥ*) attains to Brahma.” Here also there is a complication, causing a doubt whether the word really means the Supreme Being or a state of mind that precedes it. For it is said in the verse 53 and 54 that the one who has followed the disciplines described from 50 to 53, becomes only fit to become Brahman (*brahma-bhūyāya*), and that this state of attainment makes him “tranquil in mind and free from grief and passions, alike to all beings and eligible for supreme devotion.” This makes it justifiable to think that Brahma referred to in Verse 50 is only this state and not the state of being Brahma. It is supreme devotion that gives him the love and knowledge of the Supreme Being and entry into the Divine Life thereby. It must be for these reasons that Personalistic Vedantins of the old type like Rāmānuja think that attaining Brahma in the Gītā means gaining the Jiva-consciousness i.e. the consciousness that one is the Ātman¹ as distinguished from body-mind which is a part of Prakṛti. It is on this enlarged spirit-consciousness that Bhakti and Jnana of the highest type arise through Divine grace. Modern interpreters of the Gītā also lean towards a similar meaning. These modern views will be given in the next section on *Brahma-bhūya*.

In 5.10 speaking about resignation of all work, it is said, “*Brahmaṇyādadhāya karmāṇi* (resigning all works in Brahman). Śaṅkara interprets Brahman here as Īśvara i.e. Saguṇa-brahman of the Advaitins. Rāmānuja interprets it as Prakṛti, Nature, the use being parallel to the clear reference in 14.3—“*Mama yonir madhad brahma*.” There is much justification for this latter view from the context. For, in the

previous verse (5.7), one is asked to feel that all actions are done by the Indriyas, which are parts of Prakṛti, and not by one's real self. So also, it is said in 3.28: "*Guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate* (Guṇas or organs which are parts of Prakṛti, work on Guṇas or objects which are also parts of Prakṛti)." Prakṛti is constituted of Guṇas. Apart from the context, the difficulty in fixing the meaning is caused by the fact that except in the nominative and accusative cases Brahman and Brahmā cannot be distinguished. The former is neuter and means the Supreme Being, and the latter, Brahma, is masculine and means the creator Brahmā. But Brahma, also neuter, can mean the Supreme Being, Prakṛti, Veda, Jiva etc., as has been illustrated by several Gītā passages.

COMPOUND WORD FORMATIONS WITH BRAHMA

In the Gītā there are several compound words formed with Brahma as a part of it. These are Brahma-nirvāṇa (2.72: 5.24-26); Brahma-bhūtaṃ (6.27); Brahma-bhūtaḥ (5.24, 18.54); Brahma-bhūyam (14.26; 18.53); Brahma-yoga-yukta (5.21) etc. From an Advaitic point of view, most these expressions signify 'becoming one with Brahman', and that is the way in which a reader of the Gītā usually understands these expressions. But the fact that the word Brahma has, as shown in the previous section, many meanings, should make us exercise much caution in interpreting the word as Supreme Being wherever we come across that word. For a detailed discussion on the various views held on these expressions, the reader may refer to Note 6 on V. 24 (p. 164), Note on 27 of xiv (p. 374), and Note 7 on 51-55 xviii (p. 474). A scrutiny of the text and the discussions referred to above, will make one feel that Brahma-bhūyam and Brahmi-sthiti do not represent the attainment of the Supreme Being, but are only a stepping stone to it. According to modern scholars these expressions show an attempt, on the part of the Gītā, to accommodate certain current Buddhistic ideologies with its thought, just as it does with Sāṃkhyan ideas as discussed in Appendix I. The

acceptance of this modern view is complicated by the difficulty that such an acceptance will imply a post-Buddhistic date to the Text, which is contrary to the Indian tradition that it was revealed at the time of the Mahābhārata war, shortly before the Kali era began in 3100 B.C. or thereabout. For Rāmānuja, however, it poses no difficulty, because he accepts Ātman or the Jīva also as a meaning of Brahman. To attain to the consciousness that one is a Jīva, a spiritual monad as distinguished from the body-mind, is the stepping stone to the attainment of supreme devotion to, and knowledge of, God.

AKSARA

Derived from the root 'Kṣa', the various dictionary meanings of the word are: Imperishable; unalterable; sword; Siva; Viṣṇu; syllable; Om; letter; vowel; sound; word; final beatitude; religious austerity; sacrifice; water; and speech. In the Gītā it is used in some of these different senses as shown below.

1. *Brahmā'kṣara-samudbhavam* 3.15 (Brahma or Veda is born of Akṣara the Imperishable i.e the Supreme Being). Because of the various alternative meanings for Brahma, other meanings also are given for it.

2. *Akṣaram Brahma paramam* 8.3 (Brahman supreme is Akṣara, the Imperishable, higher than all). The word here is equated with the Supreme Being.

3. *Om ity ek'ākṣaram Brahma* 8.13—(Om, the single syllable, is Brahma.)

4. *Girām asmy ekam akṣaram* 10-25 (among utterances I am the mono-syllabled Om).

5. *Yad akṣaram vedavido vadanti...tat te padam* 8.11 (what the knowers of Veda call Akṣara, the Imperishable, of that Status, I shall speak to you). The meaning of the word here is a state of attainment.

6. *Tvam akṣaram paramam veditavyam* 11. 18 (Thou art the Imperishable Being who is the highest goal of wisdom).

7. In 11. 37 occurs *Tvam akṣaram sad-asat tat-param yat* (Thou art the Akṣara, the Immutable, who is both exis-

tance, *sat*, and non-existence, *asat*, and what is beyond that). It can mean that Kṛṣṇa is equated with the Impersonal Absolute or Supreme Being here, or it can also be an adjectival complement describing Kṛṣṇa as one who has no decay like ordinary entities known to us.

8. In 12. 1 occurs the passage: "*Ye c'āpy akṣaram avyaktaṁ* (those who adore or meditate on the Akṣara, the Imperishable, and the Avyakta, unmanifest or unclear)." From the description of it that follows in 12. 3 and 4 it does not look like the Impersonal Absolute of Vedānta except for the words *acintya* and *kūṭastha*. It is formless but not what is described as *Neti Neti*.

9. In 8. 21 occurs "*Avyaktō kṣara ityuktas tam āhuḥ paramām gatim*—what is known as the Unmanifest and as the Imperishable (Akṣara), is called My Supreme State (*Gati*)." The same is the case in the highly controversial verse 15. 16: "*Dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaras' c'ākṣara eva ca*—there are two categories, *Puruṣas*, the perishable (*kṣaraḥ*) and the imperishable (*ākṣaraḥ*)." Here it is used to describe two kinds of *Puruṣas*. Whether that second *Puruṣa* described as *Akṣara* is *Jīva* or *Māyā-śakti* or anything else—is disputed. For discussion on this, see Note 5 on p. 39. Anyway, it is not the Impersonal Absolute.

10. In 10.33 occurs "*Akṣarāṇām akāro'smi*—among Akṣaras (letters) I am the letter A." Here the word is used in the same sense as earlier in "*Om ity ekākṣaram Brahma*—the single syllable *Om* is *Brahma*. (8.13)".

AVYAKTA

Avyakta is another word of technical importance used very widely in varying senses in different contexts. The common meaning of the word is "anything that is not clear." Probably basing on this meaning it has been used in the *Gītā* in the following senses: unclear, *Ātman*, *Prakṛti*, the Impersonal Absolute, and the Supreme Abode. The use of the word in these varying meanings may be, as in the case of the other words considered, because of the attempt made by the *Gītā* to synthesise various systems of thought or due to the

fluidity of the meanings of these words at the time when the Gītā came into existence.

1. "*Avyakt'ādini bhūtani* 2.28—The origin of beings is unclear (*avyakta*)". 2.A little earlier (2.25) the word has been used to describe the Ātman: "*Avyakto' yam, acintyo' yam*—the Ātman is *Avyakta* (not manifest to the senses)". This seems to be contrary in a way to the classical Advaitic idea that the Atman is *svatas-siddha* or self-revealed. Probably a reconciliation might be effected on the consideration that unclearness is only on the sense level and not in the intuitive sense. 3. In 8.18 occurs, "*Avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ* etc. i.e. from the *Avyakta*, i.e. Prakṛti or Root Nature in unmanifested condition, all things come into manifestation etc." *Avyakta* is a common equivalent of Prakṛti in the unmanifest condition in the Sāṃkhya system. The Gītā adopts the same meaning for it here. So the swing of the meaning of the word from the soul to Prakṛti may be noted. 4. In 7.24 it is said referring to the view of the ignorant about the Incarnation, "*Avyaktam vyuktim āpannam manyante mām* etc.—the ignorant think of Me as *Avyakta* (unmanifest) come into manifestation. Here it can mean the Sāṃkhyan Prakṛti in contrast to its manifestation. Or it may have no technical sense, but that the ignorant hold the Incarnation too as just a man as referred to in 3.21. 5. In 12.1 the word *Avyakta* is used in a very ambiguous manner. The passage is "*Evam satatayuktā ye... ye cā-pyakṣaram avyaktam*—which of these have greater understanding of Yoga, those who are devotees of the Personal or those devoted to that which is Akṣaram and *Avyaktam* (the imperishable and the unclear)?" Śaṅkara interprets these words as meaning the adjunctless and the unclear (i.e. attributeless and not visible to the senses). In other words, it refers to the Impersonal Absolute (*Nirviśeṣa Brahman*). For Rāmānuja it means the individual self (*Pratyagātmā*). Shortly after the quoted verse, the word comes again in 12.5 "*Avyakt'āsakta cetasām* (of those who are devoted to the *Avyakta*)". In the context of the Gītā, it is very difficult to say to what this word *Avyakta* here refers. For, in the previous chapter the cosmic form of the Lord was described and it was declared that its experience can be had only by supreme Bhakti. So the contrast drawn here is

between Bhakti and another discipline. This second alternative discipline must be what is contained in some earlier chapter, say, as in 8.3—*Akṣaram Brahma paramam* etc. or in 2.72—*Eṣā Brāhmī-sthitiḥ* etc. It is described by several other epithets also in verse 3 of this 12th chapter itself by words like *anirdeśa*, *acintya*, *avyakta*, *kūṭastha*, etc., which indicate it to be Impersonal. Rāmānuja, however interprets all these words to mean soul or Atman-consciousness. In that case, it has to be explained how even they, the latter type of aspirants, attain to 'Me'—*te prāpnuvanti mām eva*. The explanation is perhaps found in 8.21 and 22. There the Supreme Abode is described as *Avyakta*, *Akṣara* etc., and it is also added that the Supreme Being (*Puruṣaḥ paraḥ*) is obtained through supreme and exclusive Bhakti (*bhaktiṃ labhyas tv' anyanyā*). So it means even those who follow the path of the Akṣara, be it the Impersonal Absolute or soul consciousness, attain supreme devotion and consequently Divine grace, and thereby only they are lifted up from Samsāra. But their path is difficult according to the Gītā.

In 13.5 the word *Avyakta* means *Prakṛti*, the stuff of Nature, as in the Sāṃkhya philosophy. The passage is: *Mabā-bhūtāny ahamkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca*. Here it is to be noted that the same word, meaning the Impersonal Absolute and the soul consciousness in other contexts, is used in the Gītā in the Sāṃkhyan sense as *Prakṛti*. Now these two entirely different meanings of the word are brought clearly side by side in 8.20 and 21. "*Paras tasmāt tu bhavo nyo vyakto' vyaktāt sanātanaḥ, yaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu nātyatsu na vinaśyati*—different from the undifferentiated state of *Prakṛti* (*Avyakta*), there is another, the Supreme and Eternal *Avyakta* or Unmanifested who remains unaffected even when everything is destroyed." For full explanation see Note 4 on p. 231.

PURUṢA

This is another important word used in different senses in the Gītā. Its common non-technical sense is, a man, a person. Coming from the root '*Puru*' meaning 'man', its dictionary meanings are: a male, a person, officer, attendant, esrvant, follower of the Sāṃkhya philosophy, representative

of a race, Primeval Man who is the source of the universe; identified with Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Durgā; the personal animating principle; soul of the universe; the conscious principle of the Sāṃkhya; a prince etc.

In 2.21 it is used in the sense of a man or person. It runs: *Katham sa puruṣaḥ Pārtha kam ghātayati hanti kam*—how and whom can that person kill, how and whom can he cause to be killed. In the same sense it is used in 3.4 and 3.36.

A totally different use occurs in a later chapter (8.4): *"Puruṣas c'ādhidaivatam*—Puruṣa is what refers to Divinities. Puruṣa here means the indwelling spirit. Śāṅkara interprets Puruṣa here as *'pūrṇam anena sarvaṃ iti; puriṣa yanāt vā puruṣaḥ'* (what infills all or what reclines in the city of the body). This, according to him, is Hiraṇyagarbha (the cosmic soul) installed in the sun, who is the protector of all the Indriyas (instruments of cognition and action). Indriyas are called Devas. It may be described as the pervading spiritual essence in the individual. That it is not Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being, is sure from the last line of the verse which says, "I am the Adhiyajña, the recipient of all worship in all bodies".

Later in the same Chapter (8.22) the word Puruṣa with the adjective 'Paraḥ' (supreme) is used to indicate the Supreme Being—*Puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ*. In the same sense it is used in 11.18 with a different descriptive epithet *'Sanātanaḥ'* (eternal)—*'Sanātanas tvam puruṣaḥ*. In the same sense the word is used in 11.38: *"Tvam ādi devaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ*—Thou art the Puruṣa, the first of all divinities and the most ancient.' However it looks that the meaning of the other epithet *'Adhidaivatam'* in 8.4 is here reflected in a way; for Brahmā is the first of the Devas. But the context and the later descriptive epithets show that it means the Supreme Being and not Hiraṇyagarbha Brahmā. It only reveals the fluidity of the meaning of the word.

The same fluidity in the meaning of the word *Puruṣa* is revealed in its use in Verses 19—22 of the 13th Chp. At first it is used in the pure Sāṃkhyan sense of 'a monad of consciousness' as distinct from the purely insentient and unconscious Nature (Prakṛti). For example *"Prakṛtim puruṣam c'aiva viddhy anādi ubhāvapi*—know both Prakṛti and Puruṣa to be beginningless eternal verities. In the few

succeeding verses the word is used in the same sense, but coming to the 22nd verse, the meaning is changed by adding the descriptive epithets *paraḥ* and others to it. It becomes '*Puruṣaḥ paraḥ*'—the supreme Self or *īśvara* as the indweller.

But the most confusing use of the word occurs in verses 16 to 18 of Chap. 15. For a detailed discussion of it reference may be made to Note 5 of chapter 15. Here the word *Puruṣa* is used for *Kṛṣṇa*, for the changing manifestations of *Prakṛti* as body-minds and also for what the text calls *Kūṭastha* and *Akṣara*,—words that are interpreted in different ways. The ordinary meaning of these words is 'firmly set' and 'undecaying'. What the entity meant is anybody's guess. Many commentators feel that it denotes *Prakṛti*. In that case *Prakṛti* also becomes '*Puruṣa*'. The Supreme Being is distinguished from these *Puruṣas* as *Puruṣottama* and *Paramātmā*—the highest *Puruṣa* or the Supreme Spirit. In these contexts the word *Puruṣa* seems to mean only a 'category'. The fluidity of the meaning of the word is astonishing.

A recent research work of Prof. P.M. Modi entitled '*Akṣara*' has got something very interesting and novel to say on these words with fluid meanings. He studies the words *Akṣara*, *Puruṣa*, *Avyakta* and *Brahman* in the light of the various contexts in the *Gītā* and also in relation to their use in the later poetical *Upaniṣads* and the *Śāntiparva* of the *Mahābhārata*, and arrives at the following conclusion in regard to the significance of these words in the *Gītā*.

The *Gītā*, according to him, does not identify *Brahman* with the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is *Puruṣa* who is identical with *Kṛṣṇa*. *Brahman* is only a power dependent on *Kṛṣṇa*, as it is put in 14.27 of the *Gītā*: 'I (*Kṛṣṇa*) am the foundation or support of *Brahman*'.

The *Puruṣa* (i.e. *Kṛṣṇa*) has two Powers or Natures—the higher and the lower. The higher Nature is *Akṣara*, (also called *Sanātana Avyakta*) and the lower Nature *Brahman* (also called *Avyakta*). *Akṣara* is the higher Nature that sustains (*dharyate*) the lower Nature or *Brahman* which, through the activity of *Karma*, becomes the cause of creation. The relation of these two Natures to the *Puruṣa* or *Kṛṣṇa* is one of *Dharma* and *Dharmī*, attribute and substance.

That is why Kṛṣṇa says that even those who adore Akṣara reach Him, in Gītā 13.1 to 4.

Prof. Modi puts all these in a very confused way, though he gives quotations and references to his conclusions. It is not, however, convincing enough as a final conclusion, but it, confirms the idea that all these technical expressions are fluid in their meanings in the Gītā, not having received their definite fixed meanings as in the Vedānta philosophy, of which it is a fundamental text.

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